

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

CHRONICLE

WINTER

ALL THE NEWS FROM OUR TRIP TO

MONTESSORI MODEL
UNITED NATIONS IN ROME

COMPUTER USE
OR ADDICTION?

THE GOOD
& BAD OF
COMPUTER GAMES

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL



It seems that each term that passes at Northside provides many more wonderful opportunities for those who are part of our community.

by Adam Scotney

It feels like only recently that I was writing this section for the Term 1 Chronicle, yet when I reflect on all that has happened in the life of our school during Term 2, it fills me with joy on all that our school has achieved in this time.

Our term began with our students and staff who had participated in the Montessori Model United Nations program in Italy, returning to school with many wonderful stories and just as many great experiences that they gained from this event. Please enjoy reading about the MMUN experience in this edition of the Chronicle.

We celebrated Mother's Day, where we shared in a Mother's Day breakfast and our children sang and entertained us. Parents had the opportunity to visit classes and see the wonderful work of our students and staff. It is always exciting when our children get the opportunity to show their parents their work.

A week later our 6-12 students had a visit from a guest speaker who has established a school in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas. Our special guest was a gentleman named Lobsang Phuntsok who is the feature in the movie 'Tashi and the Monk'. It was wonderful for our children to be able to hear about his life and the school he established which tries to follow a Montessori Model of education. Our children were very receptive to hear his story.

As the term continued many had the opportunity to be part of the evening presented by our 9-12 students titled 'Extraordinary Ordinaries'. This sensational event showcased the students' research and presentation work over the past term. This was an exceptional event provided by our 9-12 class.

Only recently our 9-12 students attended their 5 day camp in Canberra where they had the opportunity to do role plays in Parliament House, learn about the Electoral System and see most of the sights of Canberra.

Our Extended Day children and the 6-9 class went on an excursion to the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney where they were able to see many exciting things on this day out. It was great to have our Kindergarten children venture out with the older children in the Primary School.



Our term began with our students and staff who had participated in the Montessori Model United Nations program in Italy, returning to school with many wonderful stories and just as many great experiences that they gained from this event.

THANK YOU

to all our wonderful staff at Northside who provide opportunities of the highest quality for our children both in and out of the classroom.

Along with the many events that happen for our children, we cannot forget the contributions that are made by our parent community. Throughout this term our parents have assisted across the school through support hours in a range of tasks. Parents have organised Tuck Shop, attended camps and excursions, assisted with Working Bees and some others helped to create the new sign at the front of our school. Our Northside community is truly one that works together and I am very grateful to all those who have actively been a part of making Term 2 so exciting and event filled.



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Working Bee &
our new sign



INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Towards the end of the term I have written in the weekly newsletter about the progression of Mathematics across the Montessori classroom environments. I hope that these insights have been helpful in your understanding of not only the various Montessori materials that exist across the environments, but in how they provide development of knowledge and skills in Mathematics for our children. I trust that this has provided an insight into the magnificent way in which Maria Montessori developed her materials which assist the child to develop their understanding of complex mathematics concepts through concrete materials. The reliance on these materials as the child progresses from 3-6, 6-9 and then 9-12 decreases as they move to abstract knowledge of the concepts.

While it is wonderful to hear that these things occur in our classrooms, it is much more exciting and beneficial to see this progression first hand. At the end of each of these newsletter articles I have encouraged parents to come and see what is happening in the classroom; as observation of the child was a central theme in Maria Montessori's work.

Throughout my Montessori training, and the training of all our staff, observation of the child in the classroom environment is a key element toward understanding how children develop and how to best cater for their needs. When you enrolled your child at the school you will have undertaken an observation of the environment. I am sure that at this time the Montessori method of education came to life for you and you could see that there was something unique in this approach. Through this observation you may have seen a range of things, but certainly I would suggest that during this period you would have seen children deeply engaged in their work, moving freely in their environment or working cooperatively with others. The environment is generally calm, and the activity of children who desire to work and learn is obvious to those who are observing.

It has been my pleasure to visit two other Montessori schools this year as part of my studies and observe in both the 6-9 and 9-12 environments. During these observations I have been able to see the many benefits of the Montessori environment and materials first hand and appreciate the work of the Director or Directress in the environment who guides the work of the children and supports them in their endeavours.

Maria Montessori placed a great deal of importance on the observation of children in their work as she studied the development of children. It is important work for our teachers and I would encourage parents to come and see their children in their work wherever possible.

Adam Scotney
Principal

I encourage parents to come and see what is happening in the classroom; as observation of the child was a central theme in Maria Montessori's work.



Mother's Day
celebrations





BOARD CORNER

MMUN – A PARENT’S PERSPECTIVE

As a parent, I'd been hearing about this MMUN thing from other families for a few years. But it wasn't until I watched my Year 6 daughter, Isabel, go through the program (and observed her at the Rome conference) that I fully appreciated its power.

by Sharon Bowman (Chair)

In 2017, the Board took the decision to formally support the School's ongoing involvement in the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) program. This included committing to attendance at one MMUN per year (subject to enough family interest) and ensuring we have enough teachers trained in the approach to be able to deliver the program. Soon after that, the school began planning for attendance at MMUN Rome 2018. A group of 20 delegates (12 upper primary from Margaret's Orana class and 8 NMS graduates in the 'middle school' group) worked hard under Margaret and Janene's guidance to prepare for the conference. Six months of preparation led up to their attendance at the conference in May 2018. As a parent, I'd been hearing about this MMUN thing from other families for a few years. But it wasn't until I watched my Year 6 daughter, Isabel, go through the program (and observed her at the Rome conference) that I fully appreciated its power.

SO WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

In short, MMUN provides students with the opportunity to act as delegates in a 'mock' United Nations committee which mirrors the real UN.

On signing up to participate, delegates are assigned a Country to represent, a UN committee, and an issue (such as 'the effects of atomic radiation' or 'Palestinian refugees in the Near East'). They need to learn about:

- The operation of the UN, including how the various committees are structured, and the formal 'language of the UN'
- The issues being considered by their committee, especially the issue they have been allocated to speak on
- The Country they are representing, so they can represent the issue from the perspective of that Country

Then they need to:

- Prepare a formal position paper (in the language of the UN) on their issue
- Summarise this position paper into a short speech
- As a group with others representing the same country, prepare a Country Board, which is displayed during the conference, allowing all the delegates to learn about the various countries represented
- Prepare a cultural item to perform before all delegates and other attendees on the cultural night (this is optional but our kids really enjoyed it)

There is a significant amount of work involved, and it all happens outside of school hours. The kids (and teachers) spent a lot of time over the holidays, after school and on weekends. But they never complained, enjoyed every minute of it, and all did an amazing job.

In short, MMUN provides students with the opportunity to act as delegates in a 'mock' United Nations committee which mirrors the real UN.



A Country Board:
Guinea Bissau

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CONFERENCE?

The main business of the conference is to participate in committee sessions to develop UN resolutions which address their issues.

The delegates break into their separate committee sessions (which are run very formally, as a real UN committee). Committees are each supported by a bureau (including Chair and Rapporteur), but they take a very hands off approach, allowing the delegates to organise themselves as much as possible. Parents and teachers present are not to interfere with the sessions in any way.

Sessions begin with each delegate delivering their speech, after which they move into a series of informal and formal consultations to progress toward agreement on the elements of their resolution. This develops skills in collaboration, negotiation and facilitation. It is also a fascinating study in group dynamics!

At the end of 2 days of committee sessions, all committees had reached agreement on their 2 issues; mostly unanimously.

On the final day we all attended a mock General Assembly. In Rome this took place at the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the UN. Our delegates sat in the seats normally occupied by the UN delegates. Each committee had elected a 'closing bureau' of 3 representatives per issue to present a summary of their draft resolution and formally pass the resolution. We were very proud to see 3 of our NMS delegates speak in this illustrious setting.

Outside of the business of the conference, it also provided a wonderful opportunity for our delegates to socialise with students from all over the world, further broadening their world view. Many students have developed friendships that have continued beyond the 3-day conference.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS?

My personal observations on the benefits I've seen for my daughter, and other students I observed through the process are:

- Being inspired, and inspiring others - my daughter has decided she wants to work for the UN in the future, and the Founder of MMUN believes most delegates will be inspired to act for a better world at some point in their lives. Anyone who watches these delegates in action leaves with hope for our future.
- Empathy, through exposure to and research of world issues, deep understanding of another country and how their views might differ
- Confidence in public speaking, communication generally, making friends
- Collaboration and group work, including handling of difficult situations and personality clashes
- Improved persuasive writing

In short, MMUN is an amazing opportunity for our upper primary kids. Attendance is a significant investment for the family, but in my view it is well worth it!

All the MMUN parents and the Board would like to again thank Margaret and Janene for their amazing work in preparing and supporting our delegates.

SMALL BUT

MIGHTY HANDS

Last year I was given the opportunity to attend the training for MMUN in Rome.

by Janene Johnson (6-9 Directress)

For several years I had seen students preparing and heard about the experiences of attending MMUN conferences from Margaret and the students. I was already 'hooked' on this program and could see that it held great potential as a life changing experience for every student involved. Attending the training further inspired me and I began to see an even bigger picture. Sitting in a room that held Dr Montessori's handwritten original documents, some of them signed by Mussolini, in itself was breathtaking. To be there learning about MMUN with a room full of fellow Montessorians from all over the world was awe inspiring. We all held the belief that this program could change the lives of these students.

With the innocence of childhood thought, they came up with such amazing solutions that it seemed like they had been written by the old and very wise.



Even students who seemed so shy, were able to stand up and be counted and voice their opinions.



OVER THE CHRISTMAS

break, and during afternoons after school and weekends, Margaret and I got to work with the students preparing them for the Rome Conference. I became a student alongside our students as we worked our way through very complex political and social issues facing our world today. The enthusiasm and commitment from our students to fully understand these issues and find solutions for them was wonderful to witness. They worked incredibly hard and managed to make sense of difficult and often gut-wrenching subjects, such as the effects of chemical weapons and the way people with disabilities are treated in some countries. With the innocence of childhood thought, they came up with such amazing solutions that it seemed like they had been written by the old and very wise. They became totally engrossed in their subject and were genuinely passionate about their cause.

Travelling to Rome, and meeting with all our students and their parents at the conference, I was filled with such excitement about what was to come. I had heard about the process, I had been trained in the process, I had

helped the students prepare for the process, but nothing really prepared me for it. What I knew could be a life-changing event for these students, I now realised could actually change, not just their lives, but our world. They were the future generation who would be fighting for peace and equality and I knew then that it was possible.

I saw students so confidently presenting their speeches before their fellow delegates and observers, I saw them debating fiercely over things they believed in, I saw them negotiating, defending, problem-solving and truly caring. I couldn't believe that students of this age were responding to each other with such mature and thoughtful dialogue, and that even students who seemed so shy, were able to stand up and be counted and voice their opinions.

This was not only life changing for the students, it was life-changing for me. This program is a wonderful gift and I must thank the parents for their vision and support in allowing their children to participate. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with these amazing young students who have taught me so much and left me feeling secure that the future of our world is in small, but mighty hands.

FROM THE

MOUTHS OF BABES

MMUN is an incredibly powerful platform for students to explore real world problems and collaboratively considered solutions. It gives them a voice and a means to share their ideas. Here is a sample of comments taken from a few of our 2018 Rome delegates about their experiences:

Compiled by Margaret Kroeger (9-12 Directress)

MMUN WAS AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE.

It is my third conference and I learnt new things each time. I loved Rome! I learnt so much about problems around the world. I loved doing the speeches, making art about other cultures, making a poster, meeting friends – all of it. I researched how to get rid of chemical weapons. I think there should be a rating system so everyone in the world knows if your country is being honest about chemical weapons. There should also be better ways to find out who is buying the ingredients to make chemical weapons.

Chiara, 12.

MMUN WAS GREAT. You get to make friends with people from all over the world. My topic was chemical disarmament. At first I stuck to myself – not knowing many people in my conference room. But soon I was talking to others because we all had ideas how to make the world a safer place. Soon I had a lot of new friends and we had shared a lot of solutions.

Will, 11

MY SPEECH WAS ABOUT DEALING WITH THE EFFECTS OF

ATOMIC RADIATION. It's a big topic but we all worked hard at the conference. I liked meeting people from different countries and making close friends. It was fun to do a line by line review of our draft resolution just as they do at the U.N. We came up with a lot of solutions. I called for Non-Government Agencies to fund programs to help educate people on the dangers of radiation and to train more scientists. There should also be programs to test places and move people if their homes have been affected.

Tara, Year 6

I did a speech on the reduction of chemical weapons. My favourite part of the conference was the speeches. I liked that we all got to share our ideas. I think we should make the ingredients needed to make chemical weapons harder to find and buy.

Lucas, Year 4

MMUN IS MORE THAN JUST A PIECE OF PAPER.

The United Nations tries to help solve real problems and spread the word about people who are not being treated fairly using non-violent techniques. Last year I worked on how to get countries to recognise the rights of Indigenous People. I wanted to keep going and do another MMUN. I went to Rome with my Mum. It was a great experience. We saw so many new things. I spoke about limiting military budgets this time. We talked about how money should be spent on better things like the environment, the hungry and the homeless. I think if we speak about this a lot on social media and we share people's stories then this issue will get solved.

Harsha, 11

MY SPEECH WAS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION.

I have good memories of MMUN. My solution was to make the dumping of nuclear waste illegal and to get NGO's to help countries who could not afford to clean up their land and water, get access to technology, scientists and equipment.

Claire, Year 5

MMUN WAS AN EXPERIENCE I WILL NEVER FORGET. My speech was about the issue of the Palestinian refugees in the Near East. I got to have my say and have a voice. We started each conference day with speeches and then we starting writing down ideas (called a working paper). We got to have formal and informal consultations where we could share our solutions and make bigger and bigger groups till we were all working on one draft resolution. Then we did a line by line review. We then do a formal vote. If it passes it goes to real delegates from the United Nations. I was on the Closing Bureau for the closing ceremony. I gave a short speech at the actual UN building in Rome. It was probably the best experience of my life. Standing up in front of over 1000 people is something that doesn't register in your mind until after you do it. It is not something that billions of people would get to do, but everyone in this school has the chance to do it. I would love to do MMUN again.

Isabel, Year 6

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORDER IN TODDLER YEARS

by Megan Nguyen (Infant & Toddler Directress)

The toddler years are some of the most important years in a child's development. At no other time in a human's lifespan will the brain develop as rapidly as it does during the first three years of life. Exploration of the world around them is incredibly important in building the intellect of the child; this is done through sensorial processing. Toddlers want to touch and feel everything they see and this should be encouraged, providing the environment is safe; which is why in Montessori terms, the Prepared Environment is so important. Children at this age also thrive on order and routine which provides the child with a tremendous sense of security. As parents we have all experienced the child who goes into melt down if we forget to read a story before bed or hand them the blue cup when they always use the red one. While we easily think to ourselves: "It's no big deal. Get over it," the toddler generally ends up in an emotional heap on the floor. As adults, many of us are pretty out of tune with toddler emotions; negative emotions are often seen as unreasonable and unnecessary. The emotions are quite 'unreasonable' in psychological terms as the toddler is still what Montessori called an Unconscious Being; he feels and experiences many thoughts but he can't yet reason or make sense of them. The feelings are there, they are uncomfortable, and so the child reacts in the way he knows best; vocalising! Without the complete acquirement of language skills this often presents itself as screaming or crying. If exacerbated, we might see physical expressions such as hitting, kicking or biting.

AS ADULTS

we tend to not be very tolerable of these emotions; especially if they reoccur a lot during the day. Our tolerance and patience wears quite thin and before we know it we react to the child in a way which isn't very helpful to the child and sometimes perhaps, damaging.

I talk a lot in the parenting workshops that I present about fostering empathy and emotional intelligence in children. It of course would be very hard to support this in a child's development if the adult does not have these skills within himself. If we don't respond to children in a way that models and builds these skills the child will not acquire them. So how do we as adults do this if we struggle ourselves?

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I BELIEVE

the first step is understanding why children react in the manner that they do and respond with empathy. The sensitive period of order is very strong in the child under the age of six. In the toddler years it is a primary drive that dictates how they interact with their environment. In both the classroom and at home, children find security in knowing where their drinking glass is kept or what shelf their favourite book or toy are kept on. When it comes to routine they need to feel assured they know when in the day they eat, play, rest, take a bath and so on. As children of this age have no concept of time, they rely on the order and sequence of the day. Predictability is very important because it lays down the expectations of not just their day but their life! They feel comfortable knowing what comes next and they certainly do not like it when adults throw a spanner in the works.



Perhaps mum forgot the story before bed time or the child wasn't allowed to dress himself because dad was in a hurry to get to work; these things leave the child feeling incomplete because the world as they know it has been changed.

WHEN AN ADULT

changes a child's order or routine, it's as if they have robbed the child of not only their security but also their independence. Toddlers feel a bit lost when things change unexpectedly. Yesterday they felt sure of themselves and could move around their space (and life!) freely with comfort knowing everything was in the right place and at the right time; because they were so comfortable with the known routine, they were also quite agreeable and efficient. Things were smooth sailing for both toddler and parent. Then, in toddler terms, the 'thoughtless adult' comes around and makes changes. Perhaps mum forgot the story before bed time or the child wasn't allowed to dress himself because dad was in a hurry to get to work; these things leave the child feeling incomplete because the world as they know it has been changed. I suppose the best way to describe it is to imagine you came home from work and noticed that someone has randomly come into your home and changed around all your furniture. You know everything you need is still there, but it's just doesn't feel right. Plus, it just doesn't make sense because who would have the nerve to come and change around YOUR things and move them from where YOU like them. After all, it is YOUR life! Well, this is how a toddler feels. However, if you picked up the phone and called your own parents, ranting and raving about what you just walked into, they would understand your frustration and dismay. Why is it when our toddler reacts in this matter, we assume it is not justified?



TODDLERS NEED

more understanding. They are misunderstood most of the time. Underneath the tantrums and wails, there is a message. Perhaps we unintentionally messed their little world up for a moment and they just need us to not react but respond with reassurance and empathy.

Parents often argue that if children don't learn flexibility in toddlerhood, they will end up having a disorder such as obsessive compulsiveness when they are older. On the contrary, children who do not feel like they have order and consistency when they are young could be prone to building up anxieties in this area which can lead to more controlling behaviours when they are older, as they try to establish a more stable existence than what they have known.

Order is a natural phase the child enters into, and an important Sensitive Period in toddlerhood. As toddlers grow, they become more flexible thinkers and as they move up to the preschool years they become that Conscious Being with a little bit more logic and vocabulary to work with. Until then, we can best support them with patience and understanding.

Megan Nguyen
Infant & Toddler Directress

Toddlers
need more
understanding. They
are misunderstood most
of the time. Underneath
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there is a message.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING IN FRENCH LEARNING

by Michele Adamson (French Teacher)

People have always loved telling stories. In fact, much of our culture and heritage is built on these stories. For that reason, we at The Language Company have always believed in the educational power of storytelling – especially when it comes to the teaching and learning of French. All of the school classes that we hold Sydney-wide have storytelling as a core element in the lessons.

It is well documented that learning by analogy is one of the most effective means of teaching.

This term is no exception and students at Northside are exploring fairy tales such as 'Boucles d'Or et Les Trois Ours' (Goldilocks) and the children's classic 'La chenille qui fait des trous' (The Very Hungry Caterpillar). So why do we believe stories can help children of all levels take on and retain far more information about the French language?

It is well documented that learning by analogy is one of the most effective means of teaching. At The Language Company, we have taken this approach and applied it to education in languages and we've seen amazing results in children in our classes.

Stories help improve retention and comprehension in language learning and one of the main reasons for this is the very structure of a story: the words themselves. Through understanding of stories, children can also develop an understanding of how best to utilise language – as well as boosting their vocabulary. With foreign language learning, like French, teachers can use stories to help children place these words in a context they can easily relate to. We've certainly found storytelling to be one of the most effective teaching tools available.

If your child hasn't yet experienced the fun of French at Northside, and the magic of storytelling within our classes, why not give it a try? As well as stories, each of the classes includes songs, activities, drama and structured classroom learning.



IF YOU'D LIKE

more information or would like to register for the class, call us on 02 8005 1237 or email enquiries@thelanguagecompany.com.au. We'd love to hear from you and help your child experience the joy of learning French at Northside.



INDIVIDUAL & GROUP ACTIVITY

IN A MONTESSORI CLASSROOM

A first-time observer in a Montessori classroom will find one characteristic that is unique to Montessori education and that is the individual lesson.

by Edna Salvador (3-6 Directress)

In the 3-6 classroom, each piece of equipment the children use is demonstrated to them individually by the teacher. In this demonstration, the teacher completes the activity slowly and deliberately while the child watches. After this demonstration, the child is invited to take a turn. This allows the child the opportunity to learn by watching, then practice the activity. This technique capitalises on the young child's natural abilities to observe carefully and copy the adult. Copying is one of the strongest urges of the child in this stage of development. In the process, the children become more observant and learn self-control while waiting for the teacher to finish. Once the individual lesson has been given, the activity may be used any time the child chooses. Although the lesson is almost always for one specific child, other children are allowed to watch the presentation. This helps to stimulate interest on various activities as well as provide a review for children who have already had the lesson.

Once the individual lesson has been given, the activity may be used any time the child chooses.



THERE ARE MANY

benefits of the individual lesson or presentation. The teacher can tailor the lesson to suit the individual child's learning style. A child who needs to improve his vocabulary or who speaks very little English will be given the names of the objects used as well as other verbal information throughout the lesson. A child who is very distracted because of endless chatter will be asked to sit without talking and given a minimum of verbal input during the lesson. The teacher can also set up the lesson in an area in the classroom where there are few distractions.



A CHILD WHO needs more than one demonstration with a piece of equipment can ask for it, or the teacher will observe by his use of the material that a second lesson is necessary. As a bonus, these individual lessons provide the child with personal time with the teacher. This helps establish a strong emotional bond between the child and teacher. This bond allows the teacher to know the child better, and helps the child feel more secure and comfortable at school. For the teacher's part, each demonstration or presentation is a "present" given to the child and as such she should give it beautifully and without distraction from the other children. Grace and courtesy lessons are given to the children so that they know how not to interrupt when they see that the teacher is giving a presentation.

...these individual lessons provide the child with personal time with the teacher... this allows the teacher to know the child better, and helps the child feel more secure and comfortable at school.

Groups requiring the whole class are formed to give the children the opportunity to learn the social skills necessary for being a part of a large group.



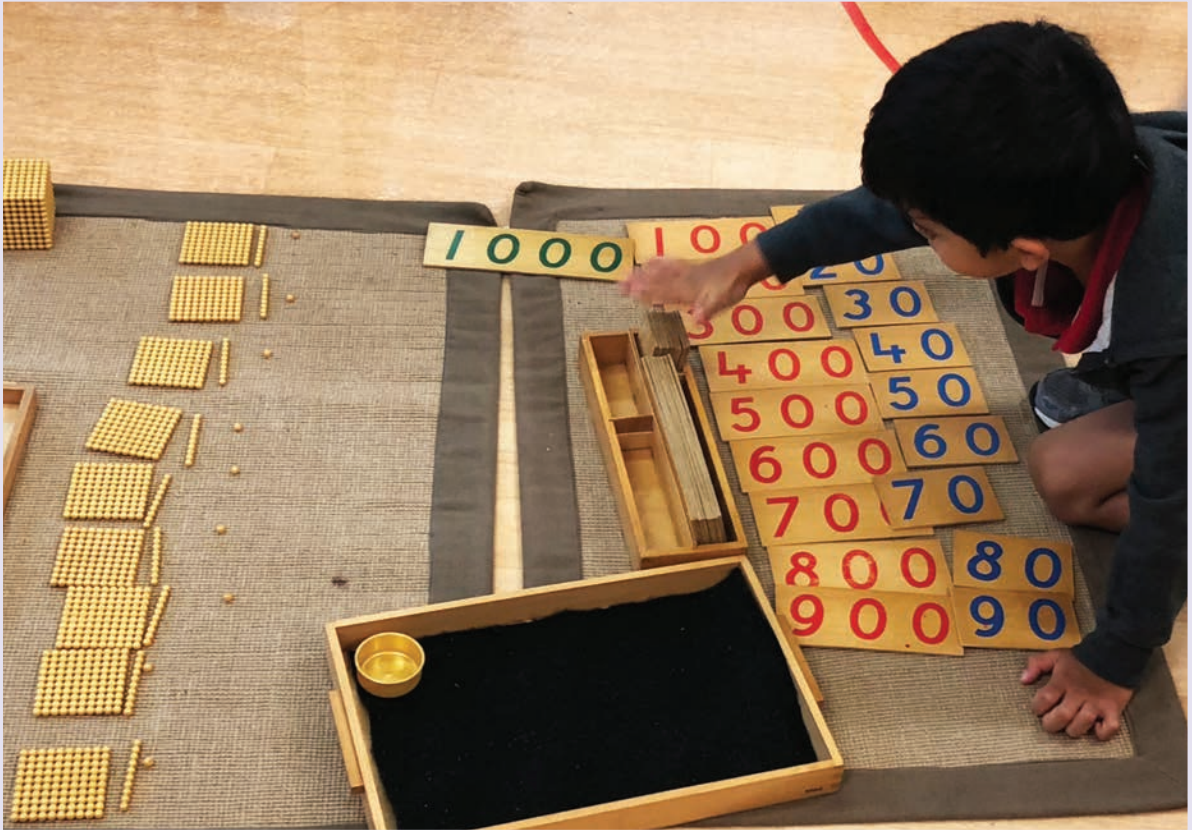
SOME LESSONS

lend themselves to small group work. There are a number of Language and Cultural lessons that are given to groups of three or five children. In most cases, the children spontaneously join these groups when they see them forming. Since three year olds are very interested in words, they are drawn to these small groups. The Language lessons include saying words in syllables, naming items in the classroom, or talking about an item of interest a child has brought to school. Participating in these small group lessons gives the children the opportunity to learn how to formulate their thoughts, wait for their turn to speak, ask questions, and stick to the topic at hand.



THE CHILDREN

are given the opportunity daily to hear a story or sing songs. The teacher will vary the literature and songs regularly so that the various age groups will be attracted to the activity. Groups requiring the whole class are formed to give the children the opportunity to learn the social skills necessary for being a part of a large group. They learn the rules for expressing themselves in a large group and focusing on the adult in charge. One reason for a large group gathering would be a birthday celebration. Since birthday parties are quite enjoyable for the children, they are highly motivated to follow the directions of the teacher. Large groups are also formed when the teacher has an announcement to make to the entire class. This announcement might have to do with a substitute teacher, a missing item in the classroom, a visitor, or a problem on which the whole class needs to focus. These large groups are called meetings, and the children come readily to them because of the curiosity of the subject.



There are many benefits of the individual lesson or presentation. The teacher can tailor the lesson to suit the individual child's learning style.



COMPUTER GAMES

OR COMPUTER ADDICTION? THE EFFECTS OF COMPUTER GAMES

Modified from an article by Sydney Boys High School

As you are all aware, the use of computer games by children is extremely common now. Children are being handed phones or tablets almost as soon as they can hold them to play video games. What often starts as a way to keep a child occupied, can turn into something more sinister without strict regulation by parents. We have had increasing conversations with students and parents regarding students' use of computers and the internet and its negative impact on the students' ability to work with focus, family life and socialisation with peers. The following may be helpful in dealing with this possible problem.

Apart from exercising your child's thumbs, the effects of computer games are mixed.

- Playing computer games may increase hand-eye co-ordination and problem solving skills.
- Video games are popular and link into three of the most desired states of childhood: the ability to have adult-like adventures with minimum adult involvement; the ability to test yourself out; and the sense of being in a club of other young people who use these games.
- The games give a sense of great mastery, challenge and involvement. Children can become adventurous heroes winning battles, building cities and conquering challenges all in the safety of their homes.
- Boys particularly use video games in a social way through organising LANs (local area networks) or simply by watching and discussing strategies. Playing computer games is not completely passive.

What often starts as a way to keep a child occupied, can turn into something more sinister without strict regulation by parents.

THE DOWNSIDE

of computer games is that they can ruin a child's imagination and can be so compelling they become addictive. There have been some students in therapy for whom the withdrawal of the computer resulted in a grief reaction comparable to the loss of a family member! A few other downsides:

- Skills learned on these games do not appear to readily transfer into other arenas of life.
- Computer skills can give the illusion that life is controllable.
- Computer games are so successful at setting challenges and providing rewards that they seem to interfere with young people's ability to do this themselves.
- Very few of the games require creative problem solving or an opportunity to be an active participant in determining a storyline.
- The illusion created by computer games can be quite strong.

Skills learned on these games do not appear to readily transfer into other arenas of life.

FURTHER READING

- Psychology of the Web & Internet Addiction: A guide for parents
- Cyber-Safety and Responsible Use: A parent guide

Very few of the games require creative problem solving or an opportunity to be an active participant in determining a storyline.

YOUNG PEOPLE

with low self-esteem, social anxiety or psychosocial vulnerabilities may seek solace in computer games. If you are neglected, anxious or depressed, visiting a place where you can build cities, win wars and score points to become the world champion is a pretty compelling thing to do. If you are experiencing powerlessness and get even a hint of power through violent video games you are likely to over-value the usefulness of violence as a way of solving problems. Parents need to parent their children and that requires them to involve their children in a number of activities of which computer games may be one but certainly not the main one.

Parents should teach their children about safe internet use. All young people using the net and mobile phones need to be aware not to give out their name or any personal information. Parents should follow all the other safety recommendations such as ensuring devices are in a very public place in the house, no devices should be in a child's bedroom and parents need to be constantly monitoring what their children are accessing and doing. Time limits should also be enforced so that a child has a good balance between screen time and play/family time.



6-9

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

We are coming to the end of what has been a very busy and productive term.

by Claire Fenton (6-9 Directress)

The children in 6-9 have studied many areas of work throughout the term, demonstrating a particular interest in the study of planets, push and pull forces and invertebrates. The students extended their knowledge by forming models using papier mache and recycled objects. The excursion to the Powerhouse Museum provided the children with a wonderful opportunity to consolidate learnt concepts. The children explored the museum in small teacher led groups demonstrating interest and enthusiasm throughout the day. The excursion also provided the students with the opportunity to practise important skills taught in the area of personal development such as street and personal safety. The children were required to practise these skills as they walked to and from the bus and as they explored the museum.

THIS TERM

the children have enjoyed taking part in class cooking. Each week a group of children select a recipe to cook for their peers. To complete this work, they practise many important skills such as group work, procedure writing, typing, measuring and estimating. Once the food is cooked the class enjoy sitting together to enjoy their creations. It is our aim to provide the children with recipes which they can reproduce at home. Independence in the school and home environment is a vital part of the growth of the child and is highly valued in the Montessori environment. Dr Maria Montessori explains the importance of independence further when she says, "The essence of independence is to be able to do something for one's self. Adults work to finish a task, but the child works in order to grow, and is working to create the adult, the person that is to be. Such experience is not just play... it is work he must do in order to grow up."



Each week a group of children select a recipe to cook for their peers. To complete this work, they practise many important skills such as group work, procedure writing, typing, measuring & estimating.



DURING TERM TWO

the students also started preparing for the 6-9 production. The production is a highlight of the school year where the children perform with such enthusiasm and interest. The production will be held at Turramurra High School on Tuesday 24th August. To prepare for the production, the children work across many areas of study such as dance, drama, costume making and prop design. Students in level three also complete independent research projects to present to the audience. We look forward to working with the children in the following weeks to prepare for this performance.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the parents who have come into the classroom to work with the children. Thank you to Ming-Wei Lin and Linda Appleyard for coming in to speak to the children about blood and Kombucha, respectively. We would also like to thank the parents who have given their time to work with the children in the library and those who have looked after the class guinea pigs. Please feel free to contact one of the teachers if you would like to work with the children in the classroom. The children enjoy this time and benefit greatly from the experience.

We wish you all a safe and relaxing holiday break. We look forward to working with the children again during the second half of the year.

OOSH UPDATE

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL CARE

by Surendrini Giritharan
(OOSH Coordinator)

What a busy term that is coming to an end! We would like to welcome a few new children who have joined in term two; Gareth Heng, and Thomas Berriman. All have settled in and are mingling well with their peers.

A healthy breakfast with yummy choices is still being provided from 7am-7.45am every day.

The information below is mainly for the new families.

Our program is based on "My Time Our Place" and each week we create a theme. Based on that, the activities are organised, including weekly cooking lessons. We have created a variety of activities to target everyone's learning capability, interests and strengths.

A healthy menu has also been prepared including daily nutritional requirements in addition to our usual nut free policy.

We also take good care of the children who have special dietary needs.

Some children really love to spend time on their own, or with help from staff, doing different puzzles each day.

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.



TO CREATE EXCITEMENT

and interest our free play time activities are rotated, but there are some activities which will always be popular. Building blocks, Lego, Duplo Lego, Snakes and Ladders, Four in a Row, colouring in, story time and few more are very much enjoyed by the children. We also have a big variety of puzzles to challenge children of all age groups. Some children really love to spend time on their own, or with help from staff, doing different puzzles each day. They also take this as a challenge when they do it for the second time, that they are able to complete it without any help from our staff. Our dress up area is very popular at all times. The children like to dress up with hats, necklaces, sunglasses, hand bags and shoes. They love to walk around and put on a runway show. This has become very entertaining and all the children find it very enjoyable to watch.

Gathering in groups during inside free play time and activity is becoming very popular. The primary children's attractions are building the dinosaur forest and we observed that the younger children love taking part in building the zoo!! They also use our Lego/Duplos blocks to build big ships; castles and we can see the children bringing their creativity and imagination to these activities.



A REMINDER TO ALL PARENTS AND CARERS WHOSE CHILDREN ATTEND OUR HOLIDAY PROGRAM:

Please provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, water bottle and a hat.

Since it is a long day for the children, they need lots of food during the day however, some children often forget to bring food for their afternoon tea. OOSH is unable to provide food for the holiday program and on some days we don't have anything fresh to give to students. Please ensure you pack enough food for your children during the holiday program.

Children were very excited to touch, feed and even shear the sheep.



LAST HOLIDAY PROGRAM INCURSIONS

were a big hit, especially bringing the farm animals in to our school yard. Children were very excited to touch, feed and even shear the sheep. It was loved by all age groups. We will continue to do different activities with surprising visitors for future holiday programs. The feedback received from the children and the parents was very positive.

From time to time we receive feedback from some parents but we would love and encourage all parents to give their feedback and input, (both positive and negative) which encourages us to improve the quality of the program.

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

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



JAPANESE

AT NORTHSIDE

by Kay Chida (Japanese Teacher)

Mina san, Konnichiwa. Hello Everyone!
Japanese class Term 2 started very well with children revising their Term 1 work. They worked on numbers (1 - Ichi, 2 - Ni, 3 - San, and so on...) Colours (Red-Aka, Light Blue-Mizuiro, Light Green-Kimidori, Yellow-Kiiri, etc) The name of parts of the body (Head-Atama, Ears-Mimi, Eyes-Me, Mouth-Kuchi, Nose-Hana, Shoulders-Kata, etc.) and they also learnt some songs.
They studied about Family (Kazoku) Mother-Okaa san, Otoo san, Grand father-Ojii san, Grand mother-Obaa san, Big brother-Onii san, Big sister-Onee san, Younger brother-Ototo, Younger sister-Imoto, etc.)

Children also learnt some grammar including:- How to say "I like..." "I like Sushi - Sushi suki. (Suki-like) etc. (Level 1 & 2).

Level 3, 4, 5, 6 and Seniors are also learning to how to say "I am going to play..." For example: "I am going to play soccer." "Sukkaa o shimasu." "I am going to go to the mountain." "Yama(mountain) ni ikimasu." With many different words.

In addition, all students are currently studying Japan and Australia, according to their level. Using a map of Japan, children enjoy making comparisons between Japan and Australia including area, population, currency, politics, Head of State, current Prime Minister, capital city, highest point of each country, main religion, events and festivals. They will continue to work with maps of each country, naming famous places on the map.

In Term 3, students will continue their work on seasons, weather, food, festivals, holidays and customs, plus some dancing and songs, as well as cooking.

Level 5, 6 and Seniors, in addition to their regular vocabulary work, are learning Japanese grammar. The grammar at these levels is quite challenging so as to prepare students for Japanese at high school.

Altogether Japanese at Northside offers programmes aimed at increasing the children's knowledge with diversity and interest.

Let's enjoy learning Japanese!

Students are currently studying Japan and Australia, according to their level. Using a map of Japan, children enjoy making comparisons between Japan and Australia including area, population, currency & politics.

STEPPING STONES

NIDO ROOM

With a number of new children and families joining the environment over the last few months we have continued to build connections, relationships and a sense of belonging with the children as well as partnerships with the families. We believe the connection between home and the Centre is important as the children develop a sense of familiarity and sense of comfort in their individual routines. Also, we as the educators learn and combine the interests and developmental needs communicated from families into our program with activities and experiences that allow the children to feel this sense of connection along with learning opportunities within the new environment. We have found Storypark to be a great asset during this transition period as it has allowed quick communication and has offered us an opportunity to further the partnership to provide the best care for these individual children. We have a Special Friend and Grandparent Day coming up on the 20th of July in which we look forward to meeting more of the children's friends and family and sharing some quality time, bringing a little more of the children's home life into our Stepping Stones community.

With the colder weather upon us we have asked families to provide extra warm clothing so we can continue our indoor and outdoor explorations. The children love exploring outdoors and this allows them to experience and learn more about our environment, culture and weather through the changes they experience first-hand. They have already learnt to gather their jackets, beanies and warm clothes during the transition to outdoor time showing their knowledge in the change of weather and the care for themselves in keeping warm. The sandpit is a very popular with our Nido children as they feel, dig, play or join in making sand creations with the older children.

With the colder weather upon us we have asked families to provide extra warm clothing so we can continue our indoor and outdoor explorations



MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

is always popular within our daily routine. We have had daily requests of reading/singing our nursery rhyme book that the children have access to in the book basket. It has had a place within the environment for endless months as it continues to stimulate and engage our group gatherings. Children have the opportunity to lead the songs and actions independently or with one another as they recognise pictures and memorise the tune or words.

We have some more exciting changes occurring in the next few weeks with our new deck area being built. The area will allow us to provide further opportunities in our outdoor environment for the babies and provide us a great resource in extending the flow of learning opportunities between both environments.

Karla Moggs

Nido Room Leader



IC ROOM

Half of the year has passed and it has been wonderful watching our IC children settle into the environment and welcome several new families and children transitioning from our NIDO room. It has been truly amazing to witness how quickly they become comfortable in IC and gain that sense of belonging.

This year the IC educators are focusing on the children's independence by providing them different opportunities to allow them to explore, develop their identity through practical life experiences, and watch their confidence grow in the environment.

THE IC CHILDREN

are now having the opportunity to serve themselves during meal times. In the beginning, the children were encouraged to serve morning tea and afternoon tea to develop their confidence and ability to hold tongs firmly to serve their food. Now that the children are mastering the tongs, we have included lunch as 'self-serve' too.

Through transitioning from serving fruits to serving their own lunch, the children are developing more independence and are taking increasing responsibility for their own physical health and wellbeing.

In the last few months we have celebrated Australia Day, Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year and Harmony Day through different creative art and craft activities, singing songs and reading books. All of the activities are based on children's learning, physical and cognitive development.



DURING OUR

Australia Day celebration the children enjoyed making their own Vegemite sandwiches and thoroughly enjoyed eating them. For Chinese New Year and Valentine's Day, the children made lanterns and beautiful red roses for their loved ones. Thanks to our educators coming from many different cultures, we were

able to learn a lovely simple Chinese song taught to us by one of our own. Harmony Day was celebrated by wearing traditional and/or colourful clothing. We created a beautiful flower made from the hand prints of all our wonderful IC children. Our flower represents that we may come from varying backgrounds, but are still similar in many ways.

During our Australia Day celebration the children enjoyed making their own Vegemite sandwiches and thoroughly enjoyed eating them.



LEADING UP TO

the Easter break, we had the pleasure of raising chicks over a two-week period. The Henny Penny Hatching program allowed us to watch eggs hatching and to observe the chicks grow into much bigger and rather cheeky chickens. Watching the life cycle of chickens has fostered many discussions about how the chicks grow in their eggs, how they hatch and how to care for our living creatures. Throughout this program, the children have had the opportunity to gently pat the tiny chicks which often resulted in the children sharing great laughter and fun with their peers. It has been a meaningful and fun-loving experience for all our Stepping Stones families.

We look forward to more wonderful learning opportunities as the year progresses.

Deepinder Kaur
IC Room



"You will be transformed by what you read"

DEEPAK CHOPRA

CASA ROOM

Peeking into Casa on any given day, at any given time, you will most probably always find some inquisitive, curious minds hard at work in our reading corner, seated on cushions, noses buried in a book (either independently or with a friend).

This is because in Casa we highly value the immense pleasure and important learning which comes from engagement with texts of all shapes and sizes. From picture books, to factual texts, from single word to paragraphs, each text presents us with the opportunity to learn - facts, figures but also a myriad of positive learning behaviours and attitudes whilst growing our literacy and language understandings.

Whether gathered at group times, (where we share stories of adventures and experiences, both familiar and close to home or exciting and abroad), or one on one with a teacher or friend when the interest piques, books continue to act as a gateway to the world, changing lives and minds through their words, images and the emotions they evoke.



COMBINED WITH

our work with the Montessori language materials, this literacy exposure adds to the rich language environment which we endeavour to create and nurture within our space and community. Most importantly, through such exposure, we are building and strengthening within our children, a love of books, a love of reading and above all, a love of learning (and it is this that will set our children up for life.)

Bronte Nielsen

Casa Room Leader and Early Childhood Teacher

"A child
who reads will
become an adult
who thinks"

UNKNOWN



WHAT IS SCHOOL READINESS?

At Stepping Stones, we often get asked, "Do you have a School Readiness Program?" and "Is my child ready for School?" The answers to these questions are much simpler when there is a good understanding of what school readiness is.

by Belinda De Santi (Stepping Stones Director & Early Childhood Teacher)

Did you know that school readiness is not about writing, reading and counting? School readiness is actually about the level of social and emotional development and being able to use language effectively. It is also about having a few basic motor skills.

The ability to sit and listen to a story and to listen effectively to directions, is far more important than knowing the sounds and letters of the alphabet. Having basic craft skills – cutting, pasting and drawing are more important to learn before writing. The children that often have trouble at the start of school are not the ones that can't read and write; they are the children who cannot share, cooperate, listen or deal with changes in routines.

The first steps for school readiness are to give your child opportunities to do things for themselves.

EVERYTHING we do in the Casa Room is preparation for school. You may think that the children are 'just playing', however, the skills involved in participating in an experience, activity or lesson is preparing your child for school.



AS THE YEAR

progresses, our expectations of the children grow. We challenge your child in a number of ways, so they are as best equipped as they can be for the start of school.

This does not mean that the educators in the Casa Room aren't providing children with literacy and numeracy activities. Many of the activities and experiences involve pre-mathematical & literacy components. Children that are interested and ready to learn more advanced literacy and numeracy concepts, have the opportunity on a daily basis at Stepping Stones to participate. Most of our activities are open-ended to expose each child to enhanced knowledge.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1. THE FIRST STEPS for school readiness are to give your child opportunities to do things for themselves, just as the Montessori Philosophy advocates. It will take time for them to complete the jobs and you need to allow for that time. Examples of activities that your child can do for themselves.

- Walk into Stepping Stones with their bag on their back.
- Let them unpack their own belongings into their lockers.
- Give them time to dress themselves in the morning. They are very capable beings, so please don't assume that they can't put their own socks on. You may just need to scrunch the sock up and place it on their thumbs so that they can pull it over their toes themselves.
- Give them a visual checklist to help them pack their bag before going to Stepping Stones – hat, drink bottle, spare clothes.

2. THE NEXT STEP is to encourage your child to run, jump, dance, climb, hang, swing, throw, catch, and kick – the more, the better. Playing at the park is great for building upper body strength. Did you know that you need a strong upper body to be a successful writer and cutter at school? Sitting and working at a desk requires upper body strength – so, allow plenty of time for play!

Did you know that you need a strong upper body to be a successful writer and cutter at school? Sitting and working at a desk requires upper body strength – so, allow plenty of time for play!

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND GOALS

Below are just a few of our teaching strategies and goals that we work on throughout your child's time in Casa.

SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

- Concentrating on an activity for at least 10 minutes.
- Playing and talking with peers, extending, sharing and turn-taking skills in social situations.
- Promoting decision making and following through with their choices.
- Considering more than one approach or solution to a problem.
- Developing confidence to take action or change unfair behaviour / situations (in relation to bullying and child protection issues).
- Resilience.

SELF-HELP

- Going to the toilet independently; and not requesting or needing help.

- Wiping own nose and washing hands effectively.
- Putting on and taking off outer clothing independently – eg. jumpers, socks, shoes.
- Packing and unpacking their own bag each morning and afternoon.
- Cleaning up after themselves
- Finishing activities they begin, and packing away before moving on.

LANGUAGE

- Encouraging children to respond appropriately to 2-3 step instructions and requests.
- Learning safety information – road safety messages, emergency 000, surname.
- Speaking up about their needs, and demonstrating confidence with peers and teachers.

FINE MOTOR

- Encouraging correct pencil and scissor grips.
- Practising with gluing and pasting activities.

- If writing name, using upper and lower case appropriately – eg John instead of JOHN, JoHN or JohN.
- Encouraging left to right movements – eg begin writing at left hand side and at the top of the page, pointing to words in books as they are read.
- Engaging in any activity that requires the fingers to manipulate objects – Lego, Playdough, threading beads, sand tray, watering plants with a water spray bottle, etc.

READING

- Helping to develop the children's vocabulary through conversations, descriptive language, reading experiences and storytelling.
- Encouraging visual discrimination through games involving matching, patterns, odd one out, etc.
- Talking about the sounds that the letters in the alphabet make.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AT HOME?

SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

- Encourage your child to finish what they start.
- Play games with siblings to encourage sharing and turn taking skills, as well as listening to one another.
- Go to a park/beach and allow your child to play with unknown children -this all helps them learn negotiation, turn-taking, social language, speaking up for themselves and problem solving.(Try and let them work out the issues themselves).
- Give them some choices (keep them reasonable though, and within the family's normal expectations).
- Let your child solve some problems - do not always come to the rescue with the answers. Afterwards, discuss other ways to solve the problem; there are many solutions. (Make sure you do not only provide one other way, as the child may think that you are trying to tell them that your way is better).
- Change a familiar routine occasionally to practise coping skills.
- Practise memorising your phone number and address.

- After visiting the school for orientation, talk about the playground, bubblers, toilets, teachers, bells, etc. Make it light-hearted and factual. Do not talk about 'all the things you will learn,' as many children get terribly upset when

they come home from school on the first day and they haven't been taught to read yet.

- Give your child a chore for them to carry out each day/week to help with learning responsibility, e.g. collect mail, set the table, water the plants.
- Compliment success and do not punish failures - We learn by trying again! Point

Encourage your child to finish activities they begin, and to pack away before moving on.

out when you have made a mistake, or if something is really difficult for you to achieve, children

love to hear that their parents have had trials and tribulations that they could overcome.

- Do not use school as a threat in any form, i.e. "You won't be allowed to go to school if you can't tie your laces."
- Positive parent = Positive children

SELF-HELP

- Allow time for your child to go to the toilet independently
- Allow plenty of time for them to put on and take off jumpers, socks, shoes independently and to practise buttons and zippers.
- Encourage your child to be aware of nose runs and the need to wipe their own nose, as well as washing hands afterwards.
- Encourage your child to clean up after themselves - toys, dinner items, art and craft, clothes and shoes where possible.
- Also allow them to practise putting their belongings in their bags rather than just leaving them with you.
- Encourage your child to finish activities they begin, and to pack away before moving on.
- Allow plenty of time for your child to unpack their own preschool bag.
- Give them a visual checklist to pack their own bags the night before school, so they feel organized. Laminated checklists can be reused over and over.
- Buy the new lunchbox and drink bottle early enough in the holiday period so that they can practise opening and closing it. Have family picnics where you all have a lunchbox.

GROSS MOTOR

- Run, jump, dance, climb, hang, swing, throw, catch, and kick.
- Playing at the park is great for building upper body strength.
- Try to limit the number of out of school activities during the first term of school.

Change a familiar routine occasionally to practise coping skills.

LANGUAGE & READING

- Allow time for children to talk for themselves. Remind older siblings that the younger one's voice and opinions are just as important.
- Make every day an exploration of language - ask questions, listen carefully and encourage your child to ask why? Help develop your child's vocabulary through lots of conversations. Use descriptive language and don't be afraid to use words they are not familiar with (if they ask what it means, it means they are really listening!)
- Label some items around the home.
- If your child draws a picture, encourage them to make up a story about it - write it down for them and read it together later.
- Give books as gifts. Give your child a bookshelf or space that they can store their books and have access to them.
- Visit the library often and use the time to read a short picture book together.
- Write a letter, say its sound and ask your child to find as many matching letters that they can find in their favourite books. Find pictures of things that start with the same letter in magazines or information books.
- Point out letters, words and numbers in the community and at home.
- Use a 'Magna Doodle' or something similar for drawing and letter/name writing.

MATHEMATICS

- Maths is everywhere! Measure, weigh, count, compare, notice patterns as often as possible. Talk about and do the maths that relates to their lives - count cutlery as they help set the table, match socks, measure time, measure cooking ingredients, point out shapes in everyday objects, etc. the list is endless!
- Have a calendar to mark off the days.

Count cutlery as they help set the table, match socks, measure time, measure cooking ingredients, point out shapes in everyday objects...



MOST IMPORTANTLY, do not create hype about moving to 'big school.' At first, 'big school' will probably not be as exciting as you make it out to be, it is more likely to be different, a little scary, over-whelming, and terribly exhausting. Give them time to adjust to their new environment and you will see a braver and more resilient child in no time.



MANDARIN

AT NORTHSIDE

by Dai Lin (Mandarin Teacher)

We are having fun each week and recently we made a little secret garden!

We are having fun each week and recently we made a little secret garden! We found insects (stickers) hidden in the garden, which included mi feng (bee), hu die (butterfly), maomao chong (caterpillar) and wo niu (snail), and we have also made a lovely craft wo niu which is 'lying on a leaf'! Our little Mandarin Stars also wrapped themselves as a maomao chong (caterpillar) after being fed many leaves, and then they became a spectacular hu die (butterfly).

In our bigger superstars group, our laoshi (teacher) played 'puppet bomb', and the children all had a lot of fun. We learnt how to say different fruits by playing such an awesome game as it helps us practice sentences and vocabulary.

Wo ai xue zhongwen! (I love learning Mandarin!)



AISNSW

MONTESSORI GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

On Saturday, 26 May our school hosted the AISNSW Montessori Governance Workshop.

by Deborah Soler
(Business Manager)



...it offered a valuable networking forum for everyone who attended and a great opportunity to showcase our wonderful school to the Montessori community

The Montessori Governance Workshop was attended by Board Members, Principals and Business Managers representing 9 Montessori schools from the metropolitan area as well as from Canberra and Central Coast. Our newest Board Member, Clayton Spencer, officially opened the workshop which was also attended by Sharon Bowman, Chair, Mireille Tolentino, Board Member and myself.

Guest speaker, Chris Duncan, Division Head for Governance at the AISNSW, covered a range of Governance topics designed specifically to assist and ensure that Boards and Schools are up to date with changes to legislation as well as maintaining a culture of continuous improvement in support of best practice and the changing needs of the school.

The workshop engaged all participants in robust discussions around the Boards' strategic role and legal obligations; its relationship with the Chair, the Principal and school Executives; as well as its risk management, financial management and fiduciary responsibility.

In addition, it offered a valuable networking forum for everyone who attended and a great opportunity to showcase our wonderful school to the Montessori community. One of the ideas floated was the creation of a Montessori Board Forum, to share knowledge and key resources and to discuss strategic and other current issues impacting Montessori schools. Clayton Spencer, has kindly volunteered to be our Board representative.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who contributed to the smooth running of the workshop including parent volunteer, Janine Piper, for all your work with the catering.

THE FLOWERING OF CHILDHOOD

Recently, I came across a beautifully written portrayal of the 9 - 12 child, written by John Snyder from Austin Montessori School, Texas. It so encapsulated the growth and positive attributes of children in this age group, that I have shared it below.

by Margaret Kroeger
(9-12 Directress)



■ ■ The years 9-12 are the flowering of childhood.

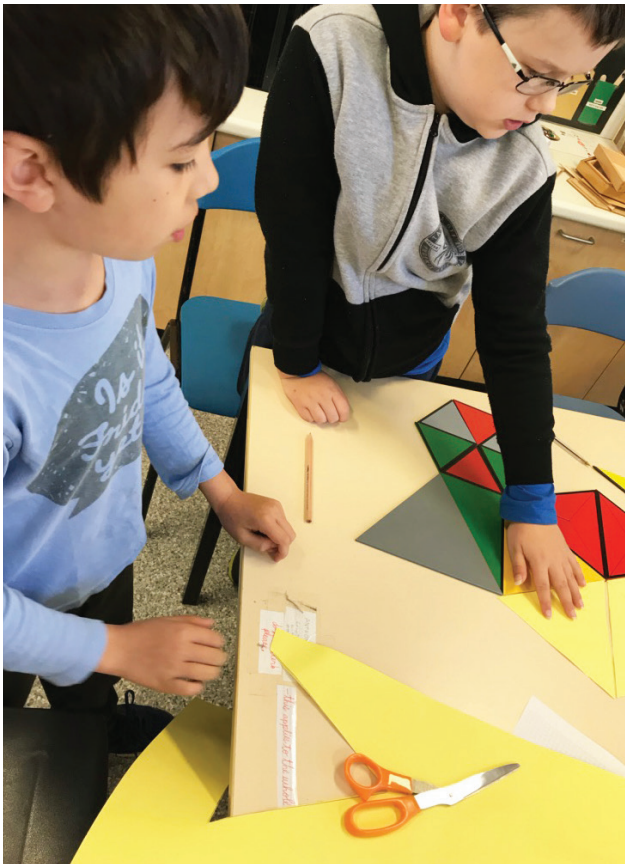
All the preparation and hard work done in the 3 - 6 and 6 - 9 come to fruition. All the characteristics that we see in the first half of the elementary are present in the second half, but they are typically intensified or more complex in some way. Parallel work and play near peers turns into a true collaboration; the impatience with not knowing becomes an impatience with faulty reasoning; the enthusiasm for trying out new things becomes a need to test and challenge oneself.

Above all, older children are astonishingly capable and need opportunities to demonstrate to themselves and others just how capable they are. This is the time of Great Work; of impossibly ambitious projects, often undertaken with a group; of whole-class projects, including camping trips, challenging plays, community service, art or science fairs, small group excursions organized for and by the children, and the like.

The children's ever-increasing capacity for abstract thinking and self-reflection make the last half of the elementary a good time to begin gradually to shift the focus from factual learning to learning how to learn and conscious reflection on one's learning. (This emphasis will only continue and intensify in adolescence.) The stellar results we see from Montessori children in high school and young adulthood owe much to the development of these high-level thinking skills,

an example of what neuroscientists call executive functions.

This is the time of Great Work; of impossibly ambitious projects, often undertaken with a group...



In the beautiful, well-tended flowering of childhood are the seeds of a healthy, happy adolescence.



THE MONTESSORI

Upper Elementary supports the children's higher-level thinking by providing frameworks for learning and exploration (e.g., history question charts, biological classification materials, the scientific method for experimentation); strategies for achieving one's goals (including research skills, collaboration skills, getting and giving feedback through conferencing); processes for effective work flow (such as time management skills, project management skills, experience with the full writing cycle); and habits of mind that characterize the life-long learner (such as self-regulation and evaluation, goal setting, open-mindedness, flexibility, pacing oneself, confidence in one's abilities, resilience, and friendliness with error). In the beautiful, well-tended flowering of childhood are the seeds of a healthy, happy adolescence. "





EVEN THOUGH

we are halfway around the world from Austin, this resonates so strongly with 9 - 12 at Northside Montessori. Recently we had a big event happen - we moved classrooms. The children responded to this change in such a mature and community minded way. As John mentioned, children of this age feel a strong attachment and obligation to their peers and the classroom becomes a microcosm of society. The children took ownership for the move. Before we started, some students (initiated by themselves) measured the new space and counted the shelves, tables and chairs. They then went to each child and surveyed ideas for furniture arrangement. Based on feedback, they sketched a plan. They then raised it again at a class meeting to make sure everyone was happy with their plan. They problem solved differences of opinion. They collectively agreed to 'give it a go' and change as needed. On the day of the move, they split themselves into roles - each performing a duty to help the whole group. Two students directed traffic as the big pieces of furniture were moved. Some children had the job of unlocking the wheels on the shelves and wheeling them into their new location while others hand carried the breakables. One student held the door open for everyone. There was a constant echo of communication as a message would be sent down the line "Stop - we have a blockage" or "Keep going - roll your shelf through." It was a joyous, collective, purposeful manifestation of 'big work' and 'community' in action. In less than an hour everything was moved and the children's sense of satisfaction and collaboration was profound. They had created their own space, in their own way, by their own hands. Just as they are creating themselves and the adolescent and adult they will be. How lucky we are to be part of this journey!

Children of this age feel a strong attachment and obligation to their peers and the classroom becomes a microcosm of society.



EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARIES

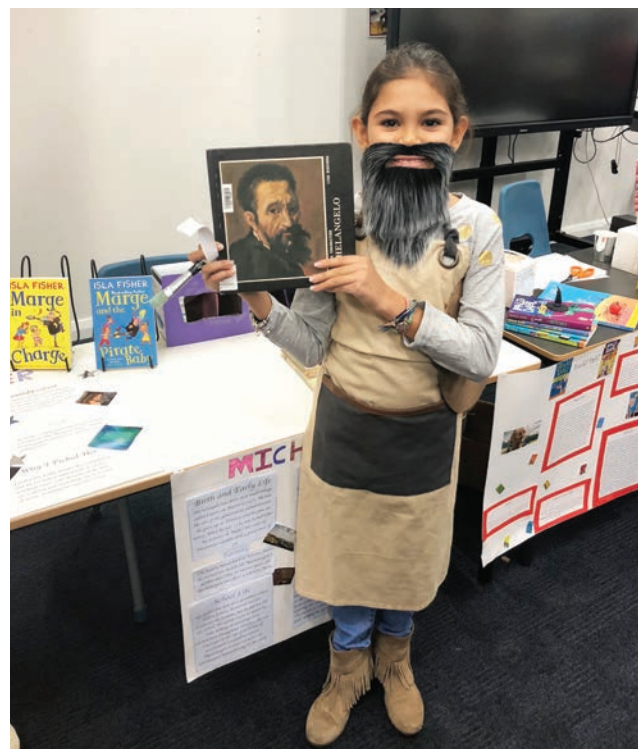
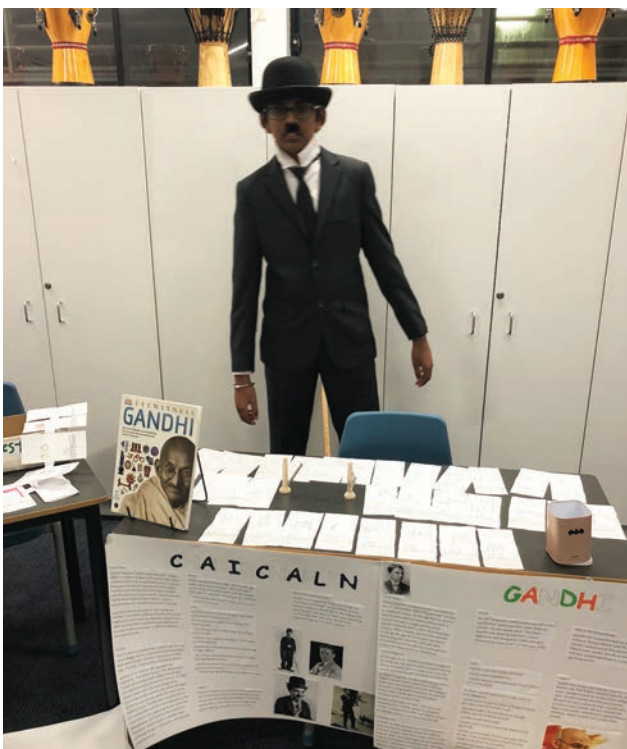
AGAIN IN TERM 2, our 9-12 students presented their Evening of Extraordinary Ordinaries. This was a wonderful event that showcased the work that has been done over an extended period of time.

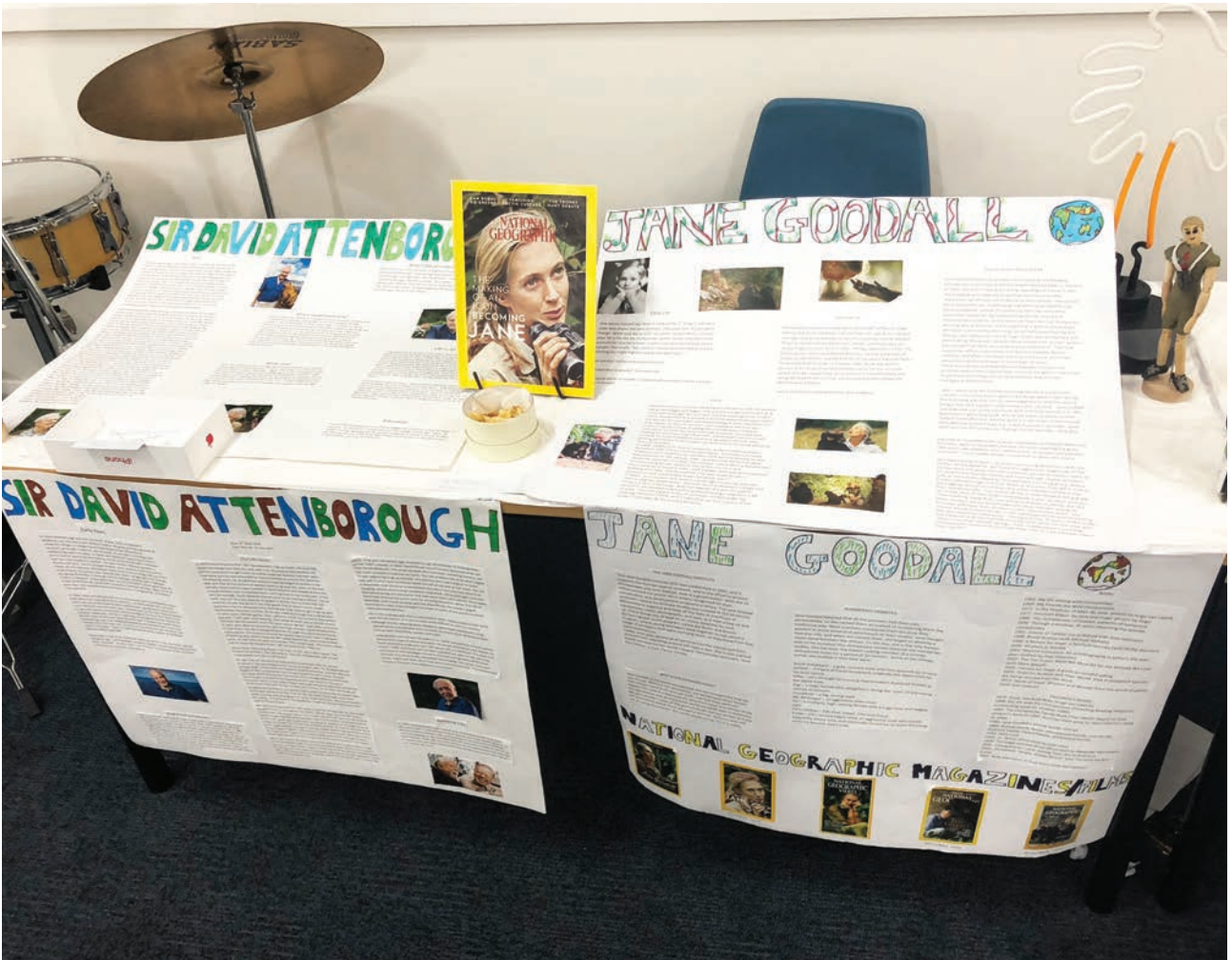
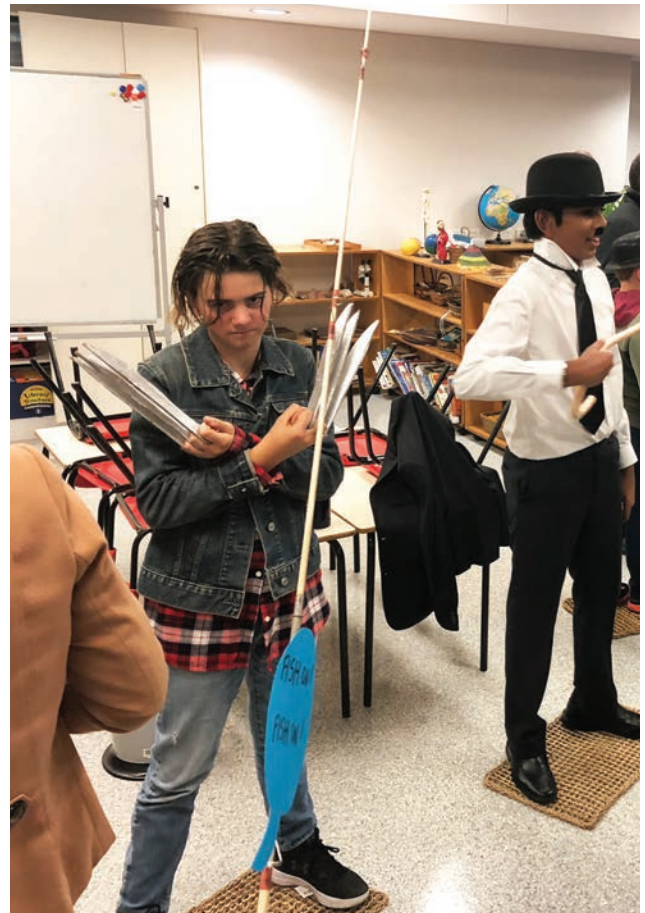
Throughout the past term our 9-12 students have been researching and gathering information about one or two chosen people who they think are ordinary people who have done extraordinary things. Throughout this time they have been required to plan, design and create displays, posters, timelines, models and other items which formed the basis of their presentation on the evening.

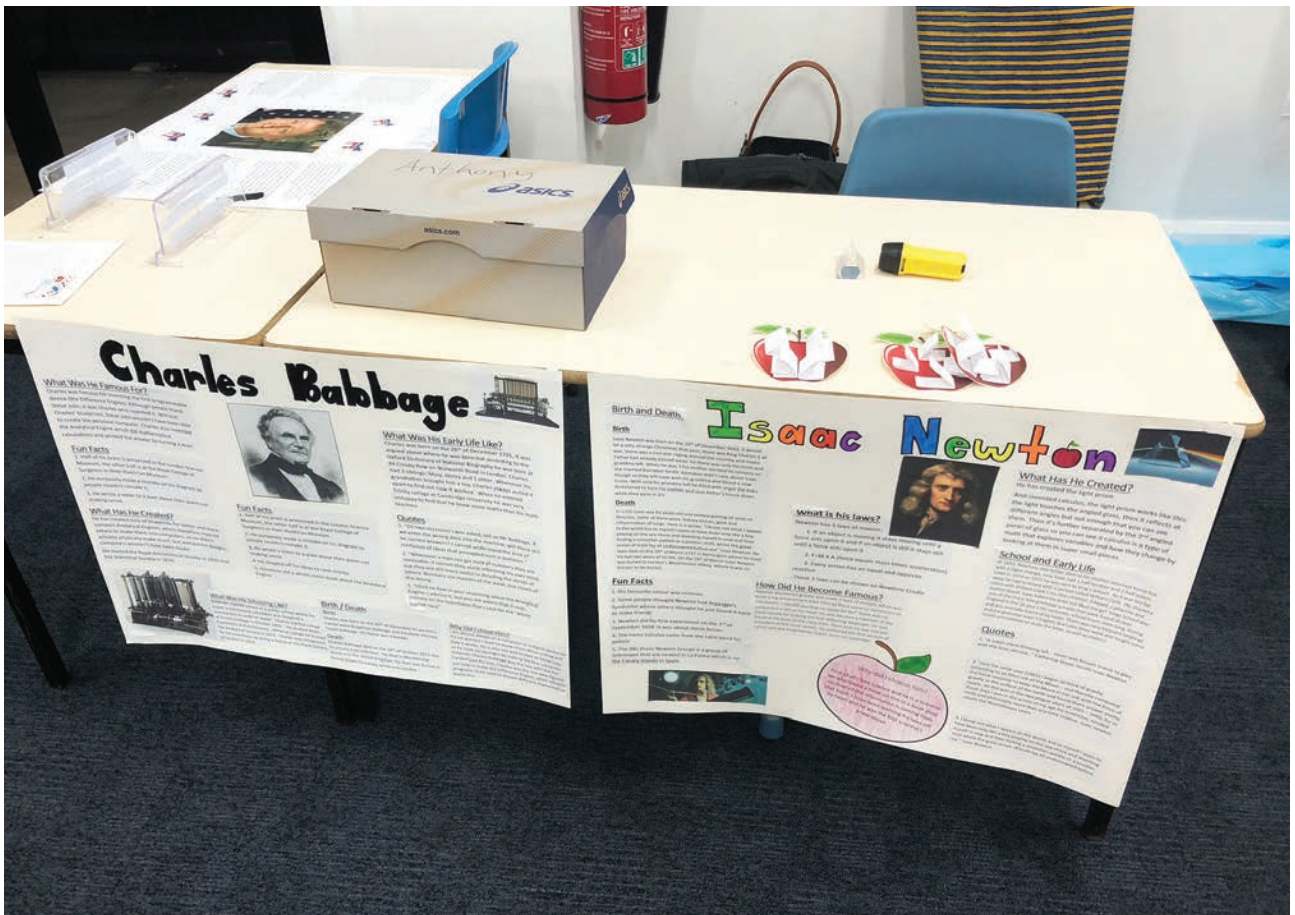
The culmination of all this satisfying work is the opportunity to present their work and engage with parents and the community to share their learning with those who attend the evening. This year the students dressed as their chosen person and stood statue like in the 6-9 classroom as parents moved around the room and tried to work out who each student was representing from their costume, pose and props. It was much more difficult than you might expect, as many of the people that the children chose to research really were ordinary people who had done extraordinary things. Many parents commented that they had never heard of some of the people who were chosen, but all acknowledged that when they found out about them realised that they had done extraordinary things.

The students really enjoyed sharing their research with family and friends. This is certainly an event not to be missed each year.

This year the students dressed as their chosen person and stood statue like in the 6-9 classroom as parents moved around the room and tried to work out who each student was representing.







WHAT'S ON...

THESE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS



Pick your own Juicy Imperial Mandarins at Watkins Farm.

ST IVES SHOPPING VILLAGE SCHOOL HOLIDAY FUN

• **Free Science Workshops** Make your own slime! Monday 16th- Friday 20th July. 3 sessions daily, 9.30am, 10.30am & 11.30am. Bookings essential at Concierge L2 or phone 8422 4009. • **Free Rock Art** - Kids can get creative with this classic & colourful nature craft at Nextra Newsagency. Wednesday 11th - Friday 13th July, 9.30am-12.30pm. No bookings required. • **Plaster Fun House**. Paint your own plaster mould. Plasters start from \$6 with plenty of choice for both girls & boys. Monday 9th - Sunday 22nd July, open centre hours. No bookings required, level 2 near The Copper Pan. • **Join in the free Monday Morning Little Kids Activities!** From 9.30am-11am. Suitable for children aged 2-6 years. (During the school term).

SUNDAY SOUND GARDEN, KU-RING- GAI WILDFLOWER GARDEN, ST IVES

Sunday Sound Garden returns with Free live music on the first Sunday of each month. 12pm -3pm. Between band sets there will be a fauna show for the kids.

NORTH SYDNEY WINTERLAND

St Leonards Park is being transformed into a winter wonderland for the July school holidays with a 24m x 20m ice rink and snow slide being installed. There will be skating sessions throughout the day & evening. 7th - 22nd July.

THE IAN POTTER CHILDREN'S WILD PLAY GARDEN, CENTENNIAL PARK

Opened last year, this new space is purpose built to engage the five senses and reconnect kids with nature. It's a magical space with dry creek beds, a bamboo forest, tree house, water play area, and more. Open 10.00 am to 5.00pm daily.

PICK YOUR OWN MANDARINS AT WATKINS FARM

Open 10am - 4pm every weekend & during the first week of school holidays until October. Free entry, pay for what you pick by the bucket. 1006 Singleton Road, Laughtondale. (Just past Wisemans Ferry).



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