

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL & STEPPING STONES LONG DAY CARE

CHRONICLE

SPRING



HEALTHY MINDS:

HOW STUDENT WELL-BEING
CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

ADOLESCENT PROGRAM AT NORTHSIDE

PLACE BASED LEARNING
'AN ECOSYSTEM OF LEARNING'

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SPRING 2020 **NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE**



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NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE
SPRING 2020

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL



It would be an understatement to say that Term 3 has not presented us with some challenges throughout these past 10 weeks. The changes that have come about due to Covid-19 have required us to change and adapt quickly, and there have been a number of activities and events that have been put on hold as our state and country comes to terms with managing this pandemic.

Despite this, it has been lovely that our students, parents and staff have taken this all in their stride and that we have been able to focus on continuing to provide quality Montessori education for our students.

During Term 3 Northside has continued maintain the educational program for our students and undertaken as many events as the changing regulations have allowed. These have unfortunately meant that many events for parents have not been permitted over the past few months. We greatly appreciate the support and cooperation that our parent community has provided as we have made adjustments to the busy school life here at Northside.

Throughout Term 3 our Primary students have been preparing for production. It has been wonderful to see the rehearsals being undertaken around the school. The work for production ranges from writing script, rehearsing lines, planning and practicing dances and making costumes. All of the 6-12 students are so excited about the production and we are exploring how we can make this happen in Term 4 with the current or revised restrictions that may be in place.

Our students have participated in the Healthy Harold education program this term as well as undertaking the annual swimming program at the Aqua Bliss Centre. Our students always look forward to these activities and it has worked out well that during the Term 3 these events have still been able to take place.

There has been much excitement and enthusiasm about the commencement of the Adolescent Program at Northside, planned to begin in 2022. The Montessori method of education is so beneficial for all our students as they move through Pre-primary and Primary school, it will be a great benefit to be able to offer this same educational philosophy and practice in the high school years for our students. The educational benefits that our students currently experience can beyond



primary school, and it is exciting to be in the midst of planning for a curriculum and program that can provide both the academic rigour, as well as the experience and application of learning in the one setting. We have held a number of Parent Education experiences over the past couple of months and will continue promoting our program within the Montessori community over the coming years. There is great interest in this program from both within Northside and among parents at other Sydney Montessori Schools.

By the time this copy of the Chronicle is in print we should have commenced the building of the Multi-purpose hall at the Jacaranda Building. We have been planning this project for the past 12 months and we are pleased that it should now be underway. It will provide a much needed 'hall' space for whole school events as well as providing for the flexibility of two classroom spaces. It is part of the wider plan for the school in providing flexible spaces for our students, as well as allowing for future growth. There will no doubt be some disruptions in the coming months as the building works are underway, please keep an eye out for changes to traffic conditions in the carpark as construction begins.

Finally, this term we celebrated Maria Montessori's 150th birthday in Week 7 this term. Many parents and students are aware of the significance of the 150th anniversary year for Montessori, and Northside is seeking to celebrate this through activities such as the planting of tulips, creating flags, and undertaking a range of activities that highlight this milestone. As a school we gathered together and heard from a number of our 9-12 students about the life of Maria Montessori and then the whole school shared in a beautiful birthday cake. Maria Montessori was certainly way ahead of her time in developing an educational method that is as relevant today as it was when first developed throughout her lifetime. As the beneficiaries of her work, it is so important that as a school we remember and celebrate the life of Maria Montessori each year.

Adam Scotney
Principal

Maria Montessori was certainly way ahead of her time in developing an educational method that is as relevant today as it was when first developed throughout her lifetime.



BURSARY APPLICATIONS FOR 2021

The school makes a number of Bursaries for financial assistance available to families of school aged children each year. Applications are made in Term 4 to the Bursary Sub-Committee of the Board and close on Friday 30 October. All applications are treated in the strictest confidence and are awarded on the basis of means testing and a strong commitment to the Montessori education system.

A bursary will generally continue while the student is enrolled at the School and the bursary criteria continue to be met. Bursaries are reviewed annually. New bursary applications and annual

bursary re-applications are made on the same form. Forms will be available in the school office or can be downloaded from the school website under the 'Enrol' tab in 'Bursaries'.

Completed forms with accompanying documentation can be given in an envelope addressed to the Principal at the school office or emailed to adam.scotney@northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au

Adam Scotney
Principal



STEPPING STONES

NIDO AND CASETTA

This year, we in the Infant Community and Casetta experienced a drastic change in our everyday life like most schools and individuals around the world.

This change brought about by COVID-19 meant that we experienced a drastic drop in the number of children between our two rooms.

The drop in numbers enabled us to combine the rooms and gave the children more freedom to move between the two classrooms and allowed for more opportunities for social distancing.

We made this change in response to COVID-19 but in doing so we found joining our two age grouped rooms, some very positive effects.

We noticed that the younger children were much calmer and the older children took on a leadership role guiding the younger children's work choices and behaviour.

Joining the two age groups affirmed to us that the children work harmoniously in a combined age group.

Having a variety of works available for the many different learning needs of each individual child is beneficial for the children. We observed the older children going back to language work and practical life experiences periodically and that the younger children found the transfers and challenging puzzles captivating. It is known that every child's learning journey is different and no one child will progress quite the same as the other. Having such a wide range of works of different degrees of difficulty allowed us to follow the child and bring them into contact with the work that they needed.

From observing so many positives from the necessary joining we have decided to make a permanent change in the New Year and will have one Infant Community using the whole space. As we do not have a designated start time like school, some of our children have been arriving later due to parents working from home and not needing to travel. Therefore, for the remainder of the year we will be trialling early and late morning work cycles so that all children regardless of their start time will benefit from an uninterrupted work period in their day.

Rachael Beevours
Room Leader Infant Community and Casetta

Having a variety of works available for the many different learning needs of each individual child is beneficial for the children.





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CASA

This year has been a very altered learning environment, which has brought many challenges to both minimise impacts from greater living circumstances as well as adaptations to include more space and outside time.

Since many changes were brought by COVID-19, one major challenge in the Casa room was to utilise additional outside time. Within our regular work cycle the children are able to practice regular tasks, make choices and refine processes with a specific goal in mind. Outdoor play provides opportunities to combine similar elements with more social structure and opportunities for child-led investigations. So, to explore a few different concepts we had a 'deep dive' into some group lead goals or 'projects'. These have included teacher-initiated tasks continuing to involve children in landscaping within our gardens, and child-led investigations into building which promoted enjoyment of dramatic play, using props and puppets.



HOUSES, BUILDINGS & DRAMATIC PLAY

While focusing on building, Casa have been excited to be taught some techniques to use natural materials like bamboo, leaves and sticks. Using these skills and then bringing their own ideas for manipulating resources, this followed into opened-ended constructions designed by groups in Casa when also provided a range of different sized cardboard lengths or boxes.

Once some of our regular builders had cemented regular ways to create house designs with combing existing play-ground structures, there developed a consistent theme in home-based dramatic play, with regular visits from either crisis causing creatures (lions, and tigers, and bears... oh my), or deliveries, including food, mail and full truck-loads of products that led to enriched play, staying "within home".

Despite being generally lower numbers, there was still a lot of social stimulus in these groups working together or negotiating goals.



OUR HILLSIDE GARDEN

Over the end of Summer and through Autumn, the Casa children have donned gloves to regularly care for in the garden and learn about plants and produce. We have seen how clumps of seedlings had formed in the soil under our growing tomato and bean plants. Thinking back to the source of some of the seeds from last year's afternoon tea, this meant it was our second generation of plants growing- just from our leftover food! In reflections and physical learning, we are developing deep, linked knowledge of how seeds work by getting close and hands-on in the Life Cycle of our plants.

There have been opportunities to learn about preparing new garden locations or small containers for the plants and how to gently remove the seedlings from the soil. Casa have shown well-honed skills in carefully picking seedlings and guiding them into new finger sized holes, roots first. We used similar skills to plant new seeds in too, and have been excited to see growth of flowers for our Marigold, Nasturtium and Rockery plants.

Whilst the new plants grew we've continued on some other jobs in a garden 'facelift', pulling long vines of weeds off the fence, and helping test the new steps Kieran placed for us to be able to tend to all the plants. This has been a favourite request of many of the rooms to come down and get some exercise in completing circular laps around the flowers on the steps.

With an extended spring-like autumn, plants continuing to thrive and flower into winter and our burgeoning marigolds, we have all had an educational and fun time completing chores together as a team and engaging with nature in our environment.

By Kieran Tolley
Casa Room

HOW TO SUPPORT TODDLERS' INDEPENDENCE?

by Sandra Sin (Directress of Transition and Toddler program)

Independence is a need, a natural urge, a vital life force, and comes from an internal drive that children strive continuously to do things for themselves and think for themselves. Children become independent through their own activity. As adults, how can we prepare ourselves and offer children the positive physical and human environment to promote their independence?

When children are being included in predictable daily activities (e.g. practical life activities such as preparing simple snack), they begin to understand routines, their role in their family and their own abilities. Adults can also place children on the path to independence by creating an orderly and accessible environment such as keeping the same objects in specific positions for particular functions and offering choices at the right times and only lend a hand when children need our help. When adults offer realistic and acceptable choices, children are empowered to make choices within limits. Freedom of choice is promoted on the understanding that there are some underlying rules and boundaries to ensure children's safety. Adults can also promote freedom with responsibility by allowing children to experience the natural consequence of their choices if nobody is harmed. Adults, being the role models, also need to slow down and show children how to do daily activities in small steps so children can imitate our movements and that eventually lead to their independence.

Make time - One of the biggest challenges in encouraging independence in our children is for adults to slow down and let children learn and repeat the experiences at their own pace e.g. when children insist on zipping up their own coat while adults are trying to rush out the door to get to work. Adults need to learn to be more aware in the moment and consider how the experience is going to benefit children in the long run.

As adults follow the child and remove barriers in the physical and human environment, children are more likely to be independent and reach their full potential. Adults should avoid comparing one child's skills with another child and rushing or forcing children to do something they are not ready for. As adults, we recognise that the bonus for supporting independency is children's feeling of achievement, intrinsic motivation and control over their actions and environment. Giving a child the gift of independence lets them know adults value them and know they are capable. Children can grow up feeling empowered and safe in their abilities to make sound choices. When adults trust children, then children learn to trust themselves and ultimately becoming happy and productive members of our communities.

“Independence is not a static condition; it is a continuous conquest, and in order to reach not only freedom, but also strength, and the perfecting on one’s powers, it is necessary to follow this path of unremitting toil”

MARIA MONTESSORI







HERE ARE TEN THINGS ADULTS CAN DO AT HOME TO ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE:

Independence in Dressing

- Offer clothes that allow for independence: shirts that easily pull over their head, bottoms with an elastic waist, Velcro-style fastenings, and snap fastenings that they can do for themselves
- Make a few choices of children's clothes accessible by hanging a low bar at child height for clothes on hangers. Provide a child-sized basket or hamper for dirty clothes.
- Provide a low mirror and a child-sized brush and comb for combing hair.

Independence in Toileting

- Children should have access to a small toilet chair, which is different from using a stool to climb up and sit on the family toilet. (A stool to the toilet works very well once they are toilet-trained and climbing one or two stairs independently.) They need to feel secure when manoeuvring onto and sitting on the toilet, not at all concerned that they might fall in.
- Provide a stool for access to the sink for hand-washing and tooth-brushing. This stool could also serve as a low seat for changing underpants.

Independence in Eating

- Empty a low kitchen cabinet for your child's small drinking glasses, a small jug (pitcher), bowls, plates, spoons, and forks, each with their own place or container in that cupboard.
- When choosing dishes, find child-sized versions made of breakable materials, not plastic. Children will learn how to handle objects with care by occasionally dropping something that breaks. Breakage should be handled in a matter-of-fact manner, without anger or scolding. Children quickly learn to hold dishes with care.
- Children are more likely to eat something if they have helped prepare the food. Small children can peel a mandarin orange or a banana if you start them off.

Independence in Sleeping

- A low bed from the beginning gives children the freedom to move around. It allows them to wake up and crawl off the bed in the morning. Toys placed on a low shelf will often catch their attention upon waking.
- Create a routine that helps children understand that it is bedtime. The routine may differ in every family, but whatever you choose, make sure it is one of diminishing activity: Play time, bath time, story time, sleep time.

MAKING MUSIC DURING COVID RESTRICTIONS

by Marilyn Williams (Music Teacher)

In the middle of August a decision was made by the government that school choirs and bands would need to stop for the rest of the term as these activities were considered being of higher risk of spreading Covid19.

Hence a few changes were also made in the music classrooms. It was decided that we would minimise the use of our voices and not use any blowing instruments.

Music appreciation and composition would continue as normal. Practical playing would now involve using instruments that are wipeable and that do not involve blowing.

Singing now would be done using sign language rather than voice and dance would continue whilst maintaining a comfortable space between individuals.

On a positive note the children are thoroughly enjoying learning AUSLAN sign language in the context of songs.

There is no doubt that the older children are missing bringing their instruments to music as well as being able to participate in bands and choirs. I look forward to having these activities resume soon.



The children are thoroughly enjoying learning AUSLAN sign language in the context of songs.





SPRING HAS SPRUNG

AND WE ARE IN A NEW CLASSROOM

In the process of emptying the storeroom, we discovered an old photo journal from the pre-primary class of 2013. The children in the photos were in their final year in the primary at Northside so I decided to bring it to their teacher for her to show it to them.

Several days later, some of the older primary children decided to pay a visit to our classroom to reminisce about their experiences when they were in pre-primary and to find the materials that they remember doing when they were in the 3-6 class. They stayed the whole morning and worked with the Movable Alphabet, Metal Insets, Trinomial Cube and the Bingo Game. They also worked with the younger children and joined them in the playground! It was heart-warming to see young and old children ages 3-12 all working harmoniously together that day. Incidentally, we wish to thank the year 6's for helping us to move some of the shelves to the new classroom.

The classroom is now more or less ready with just a few adjustments here and there.

On our last day in the old classroom, I asked the children if they were excited to move and they all jumped up and down, clapped their hands and squealed "Yes, we are excited!!". However, one little girl started to cry and said that she will miss our old classroom. We rushed to her side and reassured her that it will be alright and that all the materials that she likes will still be there.

This incident reminded me that the children have a strong sense of order and that if major changes will be made, it is good to give them a fair warning ahead of time what will be happening in the next few days. This gives them a sense of security and comfort in knowing what to expect. No doubt that it will be a different first week for the children as they get to know their way around the new classroom but as they say "Change is Good" and Sirisha and I plus the materials and the environment are there to help in establishing that routine again. Incidentally, our first day in the new classroom is Maria Montessori's birthday.

Happy 150th Birthday, Dr. Maria Montessori! Your method is alive and well in our little corner of the world.

“Change is Good” and Sirisha and I plus the materials and the environment are there to help in establishing that routine again.



HEALTHY MINDS:

HOW STUDENT WELL-BEING CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

by Janene Johnson

Based on work by Dr Tom Nehmy (PhD Psych)

A few weeks ago, many of our staff attended a webinar and follow-up workshops on Healthy Minds: How Student Wellbeing Can Change the World. The guest speaker for the main forum was Dr Tom Nehmy, an award-winning clinical psychologist who is most well-known for his Healthy Minds Program and author of Apples For the Mind.

He has a passion for preventative psychology and hopes that people will have the opportunity to realise their full potential - unencumbered by depression, chronic worry or body image problems.

Dr Nehmy talks about 3 Golden Keys for child wellbeing:

1. Explicitly teaching sophisticated psychological skills to children.

Dr Nehmy talks about 'emotional regulation' as being at the heart of preventing serious mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and eating disorders. Emotional regulation means that children are developing, or possess, balanced, realistic, helpful thinking. They can also make good decisions and exhibit self-control, even under pressure and during what he terms 'reaction urges', they are flexible and demonstrate self-compassion. Schools that teach children how to emotionally regulate are more likely to have children with healthy minds. At Northside our children participate in various

programs which help to explicitly build these skills, such as 'Bounce Back', 'Circle Time and 'Peer Support'. Things such as relationships and conflict are prioritised and if children cannot manage these situations themselves, mediation by a teacher is implemented and done in a way that encourages the children to critically reflect and work towards a resolution together.

2. Engaging school staff as agents of support, connectedness, referral and implementation of wellbeing programs.

School connectedness is considered another vital key to creating an environment that is conducive to student wellbeing. Each member of the school community should feel a sense of rapport, understanding and importance. This ties the community together and creates the feeling that 'it takes a village to raise a child' which promotes wellbeing for our children.

"Life is never going to be perfect, and we don't want it to be - a perfect life would lack challenge, passion, richness and meaning. But experiencing life without psychological disorders means that one can truly appreciate all the ups and the downs, without getting stuck. And the opposite of being 'stuck' is being free to be your best."

TOM NEHMY



3. Harnessing the good intentions of parents by arming them with good knowledge to influence the psychological development of their children in helpful ways.

Parenting is a constant influence on student wellbeing, and when parenting styles, knowledge and home environments are not aligned with what is known to promote student wellbeing, then the school's efforts will reach a brick wall. Generally, parents only want the very best for their children, so their efforts, if misguided or misinformed may unintentionally be working in conflict to the principles required to develop psychologically healthy children. A strong school community with good psychological knowledge can work together in the best interests of the child.

Parents can help their child's healthy psychological development by assisting them to learn self-control early in their life and avoiding prioritising short-term emotional states over longer-term learning, development and values.

Building Resilience

Our children of today face many challenges that are new for this generation and they must have the mental tenacity to cope appropriately. Dr Nehmy says that encountering and enduring challenges is necessary. Parents can assist a child become mentally strong by exposing them to experiences which may

be uncomfortable and grading these experiences appropriately. Parents and children need to be willing to experience this discomfort. Parents often try to protect their children from these experiences and spend lots of time making their child's life very comfortable, which is unknowingly reducing their capacity to build resilience. They 'over-parent'. Graded exposure helps children to overcome anxiety and build confidence to take on challenges. The main indicator that a child is resilient is their willingness to take on challenges.

Unhelpful Perfectionism

We should also be challenging the concept of 'unhelpful perfectionism'. This is when a child sets unrealistic expectations, is self-critical and will not try things unless they can do it perfectly. It is OK to make mistakes, it is OK to lose a soccer match, it is OK to miss out on an award. It is OK to look different from the model in the magazine and to wear non-branded clothing. Perfectionism is an impossible goal and will only be met with a sense of failure every time perfection is not reached. Unhelpful perfectionism has been shown to be a risk factor for depression, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder and suicide.

Psychological Skill Set

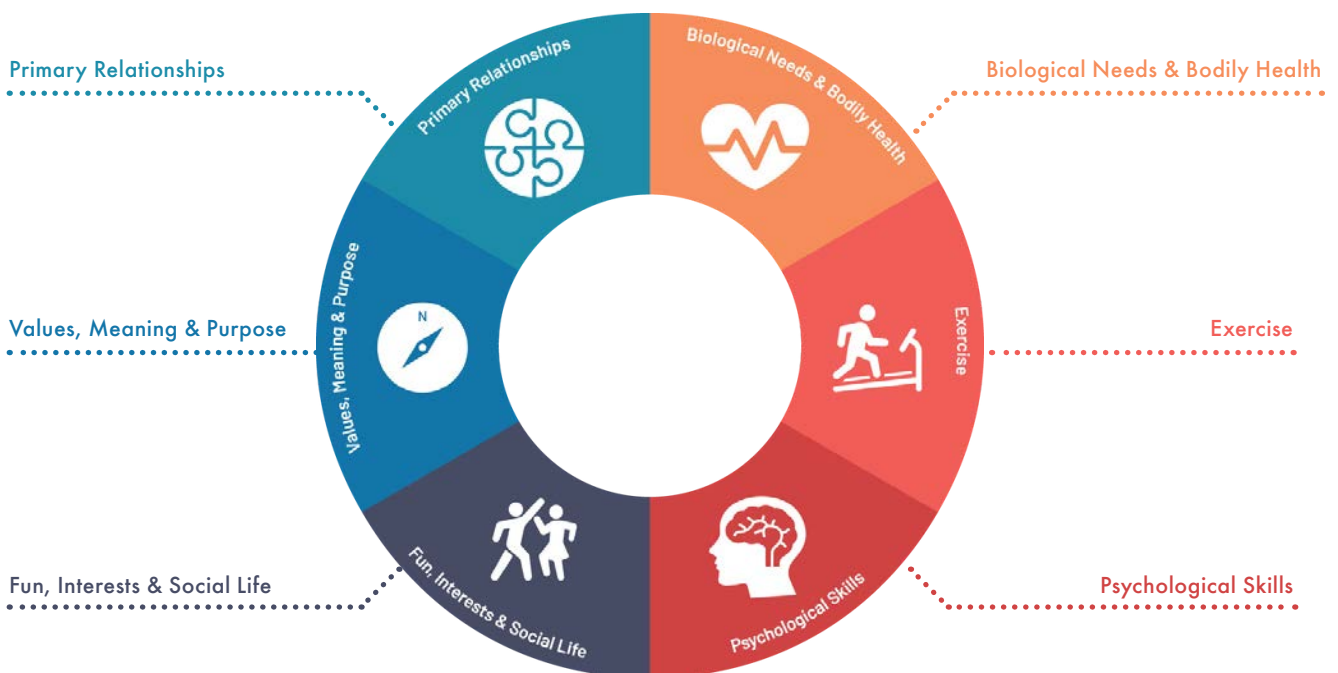
1. Challenge unhelpful perfection
2. Understand the effect that our thoughts have on our feelings and emotions
3. Be a critical media consumer
4. Cultivate healthy thinking and gratitude which reflects on our stress levels and anxiety.
5. Apply self-compassion. Dr Nehmy believes this is more important than self-esteem. It is a widely misguided presumption that everyone being a winner, everyone getting an award and failure not being an option, we are building self-esteem, when in fact, we are denying the child the opportunity to face these challenges and learn to deal with them. By teaching children

about having self-compassion, we are teaching them that it is OK not to win and it is OK not to be perfect and they will cope with these challenges better and better over time.

6. Explore values and wisdom.

Dr Nehmy's approach to wellbeing is preventative. "Having a healthy mind begins with understanding the ingredients of personal wellbeing, including a robust psychological skill-set and specific wellbeing behaviours." This needs to be commenced early in life and requires a strong commitment from both parents and school. It is essential that the parents and the school are partners and that the parents are open to being challenged appropriately. Good mental health is far more than having a positive attitude.

An integrated, bio-psycho-social model of wellbeing allows you to integrate six key wellbeing factors – The Healthy Minds Wellbeing Wheel. Dr Tom Nehmy.





SIX TO NINE CLASS

by Linda Van Lierop (6-9 Directress)

Everyone has a responsibility to care for the country where they live including those in the city; it is up to everyone to work together and to help care for country.

It has been an interesting term for 6-9, with school returning to normal as much as possible.

For the second half of the Term 3, the children have been participating in swimming for sport at the AquaBliss Centre at the end of Bobbin Head Road. The students enjoy a nice leisurely stroll up the road, and then have the opportunity to further develop their swimming techniques and skills in their lessons followed by a lovely walk back to school. Overall the weather has been beautiful, helping these mini excursions to be an enjoyable experience for the children.

During this term, the children of Cooina and Gunyah have participated in two separate online workshops, one called 'Fitbits for Sharks' and the other 'Caring for Country'. The 'Fitbits for Sharks' workshop presented by Julianna Kadar, explored the concept of learning more about ocean health and sustainability through studying sharks. Using bio-loggers, Julianna has been learning about The Port Jackson shark in particular, gaining a deeper understanding of their individual variations, social networks and more. This work has led into greater understanding of the importance of sharks in keeping the balance in the marine ecosystem. Following this, the children enjoyed undertaking work learning about different ecosystems and how they function.

The online conference on 'Caring for Country' was a virtual tour exploring the 'Linear Expedition' in the Powerhouse Museum. Key areas of focus are the variety of Indigenous languages spoken in Australia (over 250), the importance of storytelling and passing down indigenous history through these stories, and the manner in which art is used as another means to share history and stories. The notion of protecting country means to share language, visit country, and caring for the environment through the concept of reusing and

recycling. Everyone has a responsibility to care for the country where they live including those in the city; it is up to everyone to work together and to help care for country.

At the start of Term 3, the children participated in five online writers' workshops as part of a mini writers' festival. This was a new experience for the children, with the aim to inspire and encourage the children to delve further into their imaginations and use their creativity. The writers they listened to were Katrina McKelvey, Stephen Michael King, Andrew Daddo, Oliver Phommavanh and James Foley. Under these authors, the students explored creating complications in a narrative, using illustrations to create effect, description usage, character development and the tool of alliteration.

At the end of the term, the students of Gunyah and Cooina will be taking part in an incursion called 'Creature Comforts' to support their learning across a variety of subject areas. This will help support their developing knowledge on recycling, assisting them in developing construction techniques and connecting their imagination to the surrounding environment.

The Cooina and Gunyah children have started preparing for the 6-12 production that will be performed in Term 4. The year 3 children have written the scripts and helped choreograph the dances. All the children have started learning their dances enthusiastically, and have had a positive attitude towards helping design and create their costumes. This is an exciting part of being in 6-9 and the children enjoy and look forward to showing off their dances when ready in Term 4.





OOSH NEWS

BEFORE, AFTER SCHOOL CARE & HOLIDAY PROGRAM

by Surendrini Giritharan (OOSH)

Our afternoon program starts with our daily meditation which has been going smoothly. Most of the children are very committed to taking part in the practice. We can see the development in some of the children who were struggling at the beginning but are now able to sit for the entire duration of the meditation with their eyes closed in the meditative posture. A few weeks ago, the younger sibling of an Extended Day student came in, watched their sister participating in the meditation and decided to sit next to her in the meditative posture for quite some time. We see this happening with some of the other children who watch what the others are doing and slowly begin to participate.

Soon after our meditation the children all look forward to enjoying the variety of healthy food options provided every afternoon. We make some changes every now and then to create interest and also take the children's feedback into consideration. During their afternoon tea time we also take this opportunity to talk to them about the vegetables and fruits served that day and the nutritional value of each and why the variety is so important. This interesting learning/sharing method helps the fussy eaters to try some of the fruits and vegetables that they think they don't like to eat.

Our program covers different aspects of learning in a practical way which creates interest in most of the children.

We now have some soccer, rugby and AFL balls provided by Adam for our outside play which encourages the children to form a group and play a game in the front soccer pitch area. We observed some of the extended day children joining the group but the others are comfortable doing their own thing, whether that means using the equipment or undertaking imaginative play.

During the winter months our projects are always very popular during inside activity time. Everyone loved making their own beanies, pompoms and neck scarfs. The Extended Day children and the primary were very quick in finishing 2-3 beanies, scarfs and finger knitting for this winter. Some of our very young children didn't have the control in their fingers to make their own beanies but were very keen in learning the art of making their own pompoms to take home. Everyone had their colour choices and something that we were able to relate to their personality and characters. This is a wonderful art that they all learn during winter months and their commitment in sitting in to finish a project. There are other winter Yarns projects we do to have the variety and children loved them.

Some children really love to spend time on their own which we always encourage to build their confidence and creativity. We organise group indoor games and activities to build their social interaction, sharing and confidence.

The story time is quite popular every day. Children love to sit, relax, listen, ask all kinds of interesting questions and even add their own imaginary end to each story. As a routine we take the children to the library to pick their favourites when we exchange the books.

Our Thursday cooking program is going well and very popular amongst all age groups. Based on our observation the pre-primary children are very keen on measuring the ingredients, learning the calculations in a fun practical way.

Change to Morning OOSH Hours

OOSH now commences at 7:30am each day rather than 7am. Breakfast will still be provided between 7:30 and 8am.



HOLIDAY PROGRAM

Our holiday program is organised with a verity of fun and learning activates which engages children's interest, learning and most importantly is still fun!

In general, children love the variety of incursions and all the activities that are prepared inhouse but some are always more popular than others. Last holiday period the art and craft activities were very popular. When we do Science, everyone love to observe the chemical reaction and magic that happens during the experiments. You can see some of the highlights from our last holiday program.

We look forward to the Spring holiday program packed with a variety of incursions and fun activities. The flyer is available in the Office.

A gentle reminder to all parents and carers whose children attending our holiday program:

- Please provide morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, water bottle and a hat/beanie
- Since it is a long day for the children, they need lots of food during the day. So please ensure you pack enough food for your children.

Finally, A BIG THANK YOU to all the staff members for their commitment and support for the smooth running of the program during the term.

Have a safe and enjoyable Spring break and we look forward to another exciting, fun and busy holiday program!!!

DEBATING IN 9-12

by Margaret Kroeger (9-12 Directress)

Do you think cosmetic surgery should be banned? Should every Australian family be limited to one car? Should we ban animal sports including greyhound racing and horse racing? What is your view on making community service compulsory? Should cyclists be made to pay registration in order to use our roads? Well, if you ask any 9 – 12 student these questions, I'm sure you will get a spirited response.

We are again involved in Virtual Debating with schools around Australia. Apart from the obvious critical thinking, public speaking and research skills that debating develops, we also have the benefit of connecting with students from Darwin to Tasmania. We get to compare school schedules, uniforms (or lack of them), favourite sports and locations. The pre and post-debate conversations between the teams are wonderful.

How does debating fit with Montessori education?

Dr Montessori was first, and foremost, a scientist. She was constantly observing, reasoning, reflecting and communicating. She incorporated these skills into her writings and method of teaching. She valued purposeful dialogue, sharing of ideas, research, analysis and effective communication. This skill set is also endorsed by the New South Wales Educational Authority (NESA). In an attempt to create informed and value driven students suited to the 21st Century, NESA identified some general capabilities to be nurtured through all key learning areas with students from K to 12. These focus skills include critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding and personal and social capabilities. Debating is a perfect vehicle to foster and explore these qualities.

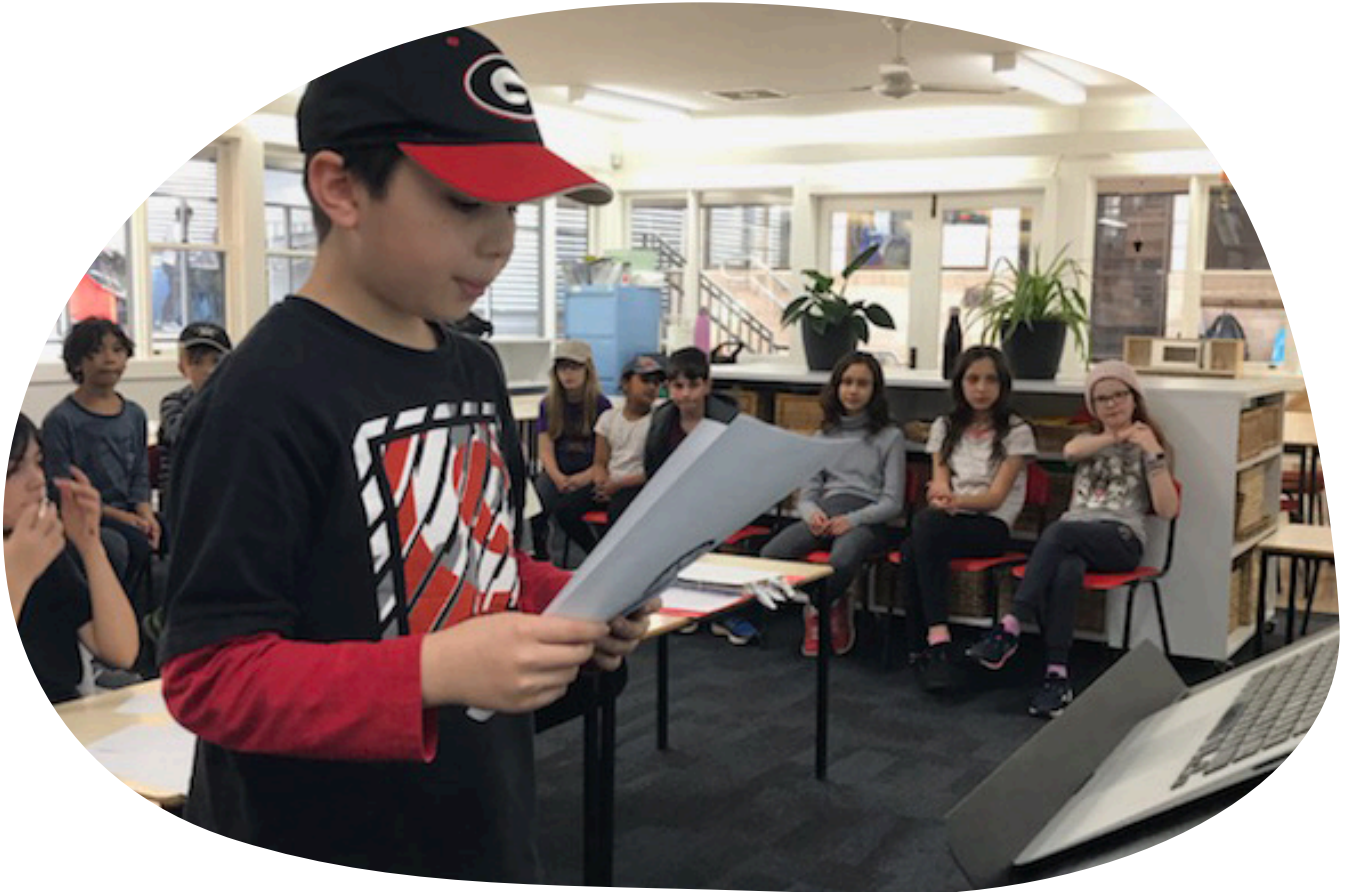
At Northside, we encourage students to share knowledge, listen actively, express themselves freely and be involved in subjects they care about. This was certainly true during our recent debate on 'We should abandon space exploration.' The students in the debate researched the topic, brainstormed possible arguments, defined terms, ordered arguments in importance, distributed arguments between each team member and thought of possible rebuttal opportunities. That was no mean feat for 11 and 12 year olds. The quality and heart felt depth of their speeches was beautiful. They were ably supported by the rest of the 9 – 12 who suggested possible counter arguments, helped them rehearse and time their speeches and sat in as enthusiastic audience members. It really was a group effort.

So, what did they have to say? Should we abandon space exploration?

Please find below extracts from their speeches.

First Speaker

Humans are naturally curious. We want to know about our world to see how it works in hopes of finding something extraordinary. Since the beginning of time, people have been interested in learning about



the stars. People like the Greek Mathematician Plato charted constellations and the Babylonians studied the stars and tracked the movement of Jupiter. Interest in space and space exploration has been a part of human nature since humans have been on Earth. From the Ancient Greeks to Einstein, people have been curious about the Universe and have tried to discover new things. Why should we stop being curious today? There is still so much more to learn.

Space exploration might just save people. You hear many people talk about climate change and pollution. While we need to work on this, there might be a time in the future where Earth is no longer a safe place for us to live and we need a Plan B. If we studied the Universe, we might find a place where we could live. It could save all humans. We will never know if we give up on space exploration.

Many people have dedicated their lives to space exploration. Katherine Johnson, the mathematician who worked for NASA spent her whole life helping to support space exploration. Buzz Aldrin, the second person to set foot on the moon, was brave and spent many years working to explore space. If we didn't have space exploration happening, we would not have heroes like these people. Their work would not be honoured as their quest to explore space would be stopped.

Second Speaker

Space exploration can bring about peace. For an example the ISS (International Space Station) is a space station made half from Russia and half from America. Both halves are connected in space. It is a symbol of a truce. If we abandon space exploration it would be a lost opportunity for the whole world to share a dream.

One of the great things about space is that the more we discover about outer space, the more we realize how much we don't know - yet. In 2009, we discovered over 3,000 planets orbiting over 2,000 stars in the Milky Way Galaxy, What else don't we know? Why should space exploration stop?

How about curious kids? When they ask 'Does space go on forever? Or What's beyond our Universe?' what should we say? If we stop space exploration all we can say is we don't know and we will never know. And what about getting kids interested in science? If we stopped space exploration it would send the message that science doesn't matter and that it's not a priority.

While we acknowledge that space exploration involving humans could be dangerous, we believe the risk is worth it. Why do astronauts take such risks by exposing themselves to possible danger? It isn't just astronauts. You might ask the same question of firefighters and police officers. Astronauts take the risk



"I never learnt anything from anyone who agreed with me."

DUDLEY FIELD MALONE

because they believe in the dream of exploring space, of participating in an amazing adventure, of advancing frontiers and helping humanity. Only by taking such risks is society rewarded with increased knowledge.

Space exploration is really important because it helps us address big questions about our place in space. These big questions include is there anyone else out there? Are humans the only intelligent life form. It doesn't only just help us with the future, it helps us about the past. Light takes time to travel. So let's say there is something 12 billion light years away, it takes 12 billion years for the light to get here, so when we see it, we are seeing something that is 12 billion years old - which is almost at the time of the Big Bang. So we can learn about history and how our Universe was formed by studying space. If we stop exploring space this learning will stop

Third Speaker

We acknowledge that there have been disasters in space and that it poses a risk. However, this should not stop us exploring space. The families of the Columbia crew that blew up spoke about the importance of space travel - even after the disaster. They gave a joint statement that said, "Although we grieve deeply, the bold exploration of space must go on - for the benefit of our children and yours" If these family think it is worth it, then why should we stop it. But not all space exploration has to involve people. We can still get information from space telescopes, satellites and unmanned probes. Exploration of the Universe can continue without people even leaving Earth.

There is also the issue of cost. While we acknowledge that there is a cost to space exploration, we feel it is worth it. How do you put a dollar value on scientific knowledge, on dreams, or the widening of our frontiers?

And what about all the problems on Earth. We know there are big problems like climate change, Covid and poverty and these are important. We should be working to fix these problems. But that does not mean we can't also keep exploring space. It doesn't have to be a one or the other situation. Also, there is absolutely no guarantee that money not spent on space exploration would be automatically spent to deal with social, economic and environmental problems.

Here is our plan. We could and should deal with problems on Earth and at the same time explore space. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, in 2014, roughly \$1.8 trillion dollars was committed to military expenditures worldwide. Could this money not have been better spent on addressing extreme poverty, or changing to renewable energy worldwide and on space exploration? Even if countries spent just 1% less on military budgets, we could put these funds to help the world and explore outer space. Perhaps the United Nations could help set up this plan. Also, private companies are now running journeys to outer space. As they are not funded by the government it does not put a strain on the country. So why should they stop?

Finally, space exploration benefits all of us even beyond space. The space industry has helped us create technology that helps the world. Without space exploration, we would not have satellites, mobile telephones, or robotic driverless cars. All these inventions have happened due to technology from the space industry. We have learnt about treating the body from aging due to experiments done in space according to the Canadian Space Agency. If we stop space exploration what else will we miss out on?

As you can see our students spoke with great thought and intention. We look forward to more debates as the year continues. As politician and actor, Dudley Field Malone once said, 'I never learnt anything from anyone who agreed with me.'



2020, WHAT A YEAR!

by Mary Abolins (Sports Teacher)

Could anyone ever predicted a year we are having! More than ever keeping fit and playing sport has become a vital part for our existence in this global pandemic.

If someone had told us that major sporting events would have been cancelled around the world, we would have thought they were joking.

Playing sport and exercising has become important for everyone whether you are a professional sports person, or someone who loves to exercise to keep fit.

More people are working from home and lots of gyms have been closed, so getting out there has become important for our fitness and mental health.

Family life has changed dramatically because of the coronavirus. Weeknights and weekends spent ferrying kids to and from extracurricular activities was put on pause and we all had to think differently about how we can keep our kids active and fit while still having fun.

Playing sport helps children to control their emotions and channel negative feelings in a positive way. It also helps children to develop patience, become more resilient and socially engaged. Staying active can be particularly therapeutic amid the uncertainty right now.

Sport and active games can provide an important balance physically and mentally for you and your children so making sport a daily habit in the current health crisis is crucial.

You can be the most important role model for your children because now is the perfect opportunity for parents to get out and play with their kids. Shoot hoops, bowl them a cricket ball, kick a ball, learn a dance and show them some of your talents.

Make it easy and enticing, get on board some wheels, turn your backyard into a sporting venue, your lounge room into a stage.

Mix it up and think outside the square but most of all make sport a daily habit.

Here are some great resources to inspire movement among kids

- PE with Joe
- Cosmic kids yoga
- Tiny Trainer Challenges
- The Karma class
- No Limits Basketball
- Footy at home
- Playing for life activity cards

Yours in sport Mary

ADOLESCENT PROGRAM AT NORTHSIDE



PLACE BASED LEARNING 'AN ECOSYSTEM OF LEARNING'

Northside's formation of an Adolescent Program (starting with Year 7 in 2022, and then adding an additional grade each subsequent year) is a very exciting development. Based on Dr. Montessori's 'Plan for Study and Work' and NSW Educational Standards Authority (NESA) guidelines and syllabi, the Adolescent Program will follow a Montessori place based model.

WHAT IS PLACE BASED LEARNING?

Place Based Programs have some similar characteristics - but each is unique due to its specific location. Described as 'an ecosystem of learning', it is 'an approach that connects learning and community with the goals of increasing student engagement, boosting academic outcomes, impacting communities and promoting understanding of the world.' (Getting Smart Staff, 2017). There are many benefits to place based education including:

- Design based on specific development needs and qualities of Third Plan Adolescent students (as identified by Dr. Montessori)
- Personalized learning that works to a student's interests and strengths
- Prioritizing engagement and authenticity so that learning is not limited to a textbook but has real world applications
- Local to global focus
- Real work for real audiences within and beyond the classroom
- Interweaving of subjects
- Engagement with complex questions and robust academics
- Service learning
- Sustainability focus
- Inquiry and project based learning
- Work based experiences
- Social and Emotional Learning

Place Based Programs provide 'an ecosystem of learning', it is 'an approach that connects learning and community with the goals of increasing student engagement, boosting academic outcomes, impacting communities and promoting understanding of the world.'



- Partnerships with community organisations, universities, businesses, museums, libraries, expert guest instructors
- Focus on entrepreneurship with student developing micro-economies
- Adventure/service camps
- Farm stays
- Collaboration between peers and between students and the community
- Promotion of student agency and choice to boost engagement and persistence

WHAT DO RESEARCHERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PLACE BASED LEARNING?

Research shows that students in place based learning communities have a stronger sense of belonging and an overall improved academic performance (Johnson, Spowles, Goldenberg, Margell & Castelino, 2020). This model of education helps students develop an appreciation of, and responsibility for, the environment (Lloyd & Gray, 2014) while promoting wonder and

gratitude. (Preston, 2015). Smith (2017) reports that students develop greater confidence in their ability to foster change through their place based learning experiences.

This model also fosters students to be seekers and creators of knowledge rather than passive consumers of information. (Smith, 2002). Due to the holistic and integrated nature of place based programs, NESA's learning across the curriculum recommendations (incorporating the cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities) can be addressed deeply and authentically. It helps prepare students for jobs that are yet to be invented in an ever-changing world (ACARA, 2012, p.5).

Students in place based learning environments develop a depth of understanding and gain 'an indispensable set of knowledge, skills, and beliefs, including mastery of core academic content, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, effective communication, self-directed learning, and an academic mind set' that prepares them for the 21st Century. (Getting Smart Staff, 2017).

HOW WILL IT WORK AT NORTHSIDE?

Powerful Partnerships

Links are being established with a variety of businesses, tertiary institutions, Indigenous Elders, museums, national parks, visiting expert guides (such as an artist in residence), charities and other Montessori Adolescent Programs (both within Australia and internationally). These links will provide opportunities for students to complete:

- field studies - such as a micro and macro study of Northside's Riparian Zone and a biodiversity study within Kuringai Chase National Park.
- mentoring by professors at Macquarie University
- access to Macquarie University's library
- regular visits to the State Library of NSW
- Work Place Experiences and Internships at Southern Cross Care Facility (involving their coffee shop, hair dressers, library, gift shop and post office)
- Partnerships with working Mathematicians and Scientists

Interdisciplinary Learning

Academic program designed to maximise connection between subjects for in-depth and integrated learning.

For example, when studying the Medieval Period in History, students:

- map the Crusades and trade routes in Geography
- study and create the music, dance and art from the period
- complete literary studies on novels set in the period
- attend the Medieval Fair at St Ives
- study the physics behind a trebuchet and build a working model
- research the symptoms and spread of the Black Death as part of anatomy and health studies and explore the similarities and differences to our present day Covid situation
- participate in fencing and horse riding as part of PE explore metal armour in Technical and Applied Studies
- attend virtual tours of Medieval Sites online
- cook a Medieval Feast as part of Food Technology
- study agricultural practices of the day including the three-field system and conduct related science experiments

Hands on Learning

Occupations (which are hands on explorations of science, engineering, Mathematics and technology) and micro-economies will be a powerful adjunct to traditional 'book' learning at Northside. Dependent on student input, these include:

- Raising and sale of quail eggs (encompassing care of livestock, anatomy and health of birds, light and temperature studies on egg production, egg chemistry, operation of an incubator, study and creation of products featuring eggs)
- Hydroponics (including testing water quality, dissolved oxygen levels, total nitrogen levels and water alkalinity)
- Building and use of a greenhouse (linked to energy, heat and light studies and climate change research)
- Creation of an Indigenous orchard (linked to photosynthesis, life cycle of plants, studies in fertilisers and irrigation, study of the nitrogen and carbon cycles, production of goods featuring the fruits)
- Development of a school coffee shop for staff and families (linked to hospitality studies, business and marketing studies and commerce)

Service Learning

- Involvement in community garden work at Turramurra
- Involvement with local charities including 'Red Threads - Red Cross Store' at Gordon
- Support of Meals on Wheels based at Turramurra
- Opportunities for students to investigate and make connections with charities based on personal passions
- Visits to Southern Cross Care to establish connections with residents (including creating biographies and leading art/cooking/science activities with residents)
- Providing assistance in all levels of the Northside Community including the Toddlers, Pre-Primary, Primary, the Office and Stepping Stones Programs
- Participation in Montessori Model United Nations (where students collaborate to find solutions to real world problems and create resolutions that will be delivered to U.N representatives)
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Links to Head Space, The Resilience Centre, RUOK for Young People and Youth in Action for Mental Health (YAMH)
- Implementation of restorative justice model
- Strong emphasis on community building through Socratic Seminars, Council Meetings, creation of shared rules and collaborative enterprises
- Outside experts to deliver puberty and sexuality program
- Delivery of mindfulness and positive psychology training



This is a really exciting time for Northside and the Montessori community. If you would like more information, or have a skill set and passion in a related area, we would love to talk with you. "(Adolescents) are looking for both knowledge and experience. Their education must be very wide and very thorough to cover these needs. It must be a school of experience in the social development of human life." (Laurie Ewert Krockner, 2016)

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