

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL & STEPPING STONES LONG DAY CARE

CHRONICLE

SUMMER



NATURE IN SPRING:
CHILDREN ARE EXCITEDLY
EXPERIENCING NEW LIFE

COMMUNITY IN 6-9
DEVELOPING A SENSE
OF COMMUNITY

CONTENTS

SUMMER 2020 NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE



04 MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

10 STEPPING STONES LONG DAY CARE

18 TODDLER TRANSITION
Mealtime learning in transition class



22 WELCOME BACK
SOIREE OUTDOORS

24 WALK THE LINE
Who are these normalised
children?

28 COMMUNITY IN 6-9

30 OOSH NEWS
Before school and after school
care and vacation care

32 TERM 4 IN 9-12

34 VOCABULARY
Learning Support

NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE
SUMMER 2020

CONTACT US
phone 02 9144 2835

email admin@
northsidemontessori.nsw.edu.au

PRINCIPAL
Adam Scotney

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Rebecca Andrews
linkedin.com/in/becandrewshcd/

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

FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Welcome to the final Chronicle for 2020. While for much of the year it has felt like 2020 has gone on forever, it now feels like these past couple of months have just flown by. Throughout this year we have been very fortunate as a community to have been able to do some great things, and have managed to celebrate together, albeit on fewer occasions than normal. Major events such as the Term 1 Bush Dance and the Primary Production in Term 4 have been the bookends to what has been a strange period of constant change throughout the middle of the year.

For this Chronicle I thought that I would focus a little on how our community has grown through this year and the many things that we have to look forward to in 2021.

It has been a real delight to see our whole school community grow and develop over the past couple of years. During this time our school has grown, and we now have 4 very dynamic and vibrant primary classes. Our 6-9 classes of Gonyah and Coinda have been going wonderfully and in 2021 we will see both classes have the full 3 years of students and both classes will be at capacity. Our 9-12 classes are in a similar situation with the Amaroo class growing year upon year and the Orana class continuing at its capacity. We are so blessed to have such wonderful staff in this section of our school.

Not to be outdone, our Pre-primary classes and Toddler/ Transition classes have also continued to grow and develop into an exciting section of our school. It is with amazement we see these young children do extraordinary things, and as Maria Montessori said, "These very children reveal to us the most vital need of their development, saying : 'Help me to do it alone!'" (From Childhood to Adolescence). The preparation and experience that our beautiful classroom environments provide, entices the children to engage with the world around them as they are guided by our supportive staff. We continually see that the preparation in 0-3 and 3-6 establishes a perfect foundation for the continuation of Montessori education in 6-12.



As our school grows, we have identified the need to improve some of our learning spaces to better meet the needs of the school. This year we have seen the commencement of the Multi-Purpose Hall project which will provide two classrooms spaces that can easily be transformed into one large open space for whole school events or gatherings. This project will be completed in early 2021 and it will be a wonderful addition to our already beautiful facilities.

Growth at Northside is not limited to the existing Pre-primary and Primary sections of our school. We were excited to announce earlier in the year that we are moving ahead with establishing a Montessori Adolescent program (High School) at Northside in 2022. Soon after this announcement we have received a lot of interest in the program. It is a wonderful opportunity for Northside to be able to establish a program such as this in Sydney, and the preparation is well underway to ensure that what we offer is both uniquely Montessori, as well as a vibrant and engaging educational program suited to the developmental needs of the adolescent learner.

During this year our school also completed and distributed the 2020 - 2024 Northside Montessori Society Strategic Plan. This plan began development in mid 2019, in collaboration with the School Board, Executive and Staff. The structure of the new Strategic Plan follows five Strategic Pillars which form the basis of the plan, and should guide our school in the coming years. These Strategic pillars are :-

- **School Environment** - To ensure that we continue to develop the environment of the school and early learning centre in a planned and sustainable way which meets the needs of the community and provide for growth.

- **Teaching and Learning** - To maintain a Montessori approach to teaching and learning that provides authentic opportunities for students and supports staff in their ongoing professional development.
- **Student Wellbeing** - To ensure that the child is at the centre of what we do and to promote the physical and mental well-being of all students in our care.
- **Leadership & Governance** - To promote engagement with the school community to ensure a healthy and active Board, and to maintain and support quality school leadership with a focus on ensuring the ethos and vision of the school and early learning centre are maintained.
- **Community** - To ensure a high level of engagement with parents and the community to promote growth and active participation and support at the school and early learning centre; promoting the value of Montessori education.

As we conclude 2020, we look forward to many more amazing opportunities for our students and our school community in 2021. Thank you for the support that all members of our community have shown the school and early learning centre over these past 12 months. I hope that you all have a safe and restful holiday season.

Adam Scotney
Principal

As we conclude 2020, we look forward to many more amazing opportunities for our students and our school community in 2021.









STEPPING STONES

NIDO AND CASETTA

Diwali (the festival of lights) was celebrated on the 14th of November 2020.

To share a part of her culture, Shallu and her daughter Meera came in the centre on 13 November dressed up in their traditional clothing, which is called Salwar Kameez. Shallu shared with all the children about the celebration through discussion, video and photographs. As part of Diwali, Henna (Mehendi) is painted on the hands. Shallu offered to decorate the children's and educator's hands and many were thrilled to have such an intricate design that would last for approximately 3-4 days. The children in the Nido room were very curious to look and feel the texture of the Henna on the educator's hands. Shallu also made Rangoli - a beautiful artwork that is often made of rice powder and colour. The Rangoli designs are made in front of homes for the feelings of strength, generosity, and it is thought to bring good luck. It is believed Lord Ganesha and his sister Goddess Laxmi comes to visit everybody's house on Diwali. We continued to make our own chalk Rangoli designs out in the playground. Thank you Shallu and Meera for sharing your culture with us..

Rilina Mitra
Nido Room Educator





NATURE has Indeed become especially important to the Casa community and many other children at Stepping Stones



CASA

Spring has been in the air for the past couple of weeks and the Casa children excitedly experience the new life in our outdoor environments.

"This is nature! I found it!"

"Britta, come quickly - what is it?"

Using technology to enlarge the image of a moving creature continues to fascinate the children as it provides nearly instant feedback to their curiosity and allows them to observe safely and in more details what they have found.

The children who arrive delayed to our various daily scientific incursions have, thanks to the photos, the same opportunity to view the precise same images as their peers who discovered the creature, which allows them to be equally excited observers when viewing the images.

The zoomed-in images are becoming particularly important to the children, as the children discovered that these allow them to observe more details and in their own time.

When adults and children explore, observe and learn together, they experience each other's joy and excitement, share knowledge and understanding and have the opportunity to bond as a learning community.

The children's urgency to get as close as possible to the creature and the screen has reduced significantly during the last weeks as the children's trust increased in Britta's ability to take satisfactory magnified photos.

The growing trust and reassurance of having those images always available, allowed the children to increasingly self-correct when coming together for those spontaneous moments of learning. Being in the front is not as imperative and many children rather step back to allow Britta to take close-up photos.

It appears as if the reduced rush to the front unblocked the children's ability to hear, listen and comprehend verbal instructions from their peers or educators nearby better.

It is a delight to experience the children self-correcting, particularly when supporting their peers with guiding words:

"... step back ..."

"... give space ..."

"It's NATURE - Move back! - It will get scared."

"We - can see the photo later!"

"We can look later."

"Don't scare it!"

"Let Britta take the photo!"

I am grateful, that Nature has provided us with so many unexpected and marvellous scientific, linguistic and social learning opportunities.

I am particularly proud that the children experience joy and excitement with the change in season and embrace the new life with curiosity and desire to learn more. Being located so close to the national park has provided the children with ample of scientific

opportunities to learn from nature and link their current knowledge understanding of the world we live in.

Focus, patience, linking current knowledge with what is being observed, listening to and linking added information has reduced comments like, "Yucky," or, "Disgusting." On occasion we can even hear children correcting each other by replying, "It's not yuk!" and "No, it's not! - IT - IS NATURE!"

With the warm weather approaching, I would like to invite you to spontaneously pause and follow your child's spontaneous fascination with nature. It might be an inopportune moment within the daily schedule, but it might create those magic memories we all cherish forever.

"I found NATURE!

NATURE!!!

Come look!"

The children's enthusiasm for nature is so intoxicating. On a regular basis we Casa educators decide to follow the children's expressed need to observe and engage with nature and replaced our indoor work cycle with an outdoor morning work cycle!

"Britta come quick, take - look - at this leaf bug!"

The leaf cutter bug was climbing on the outside wall of our building. As we zoomed into the moving insect and took a closer look at its face and the leaf pattern on its body, we suddenly noticed how it was trying to shake off something white on its 2nd leg on its left side.

It was remarkably interesting to see how the bug was shaking the leg independently. We could see how the bug struggled to remove the white things from its leg.

"He is attacked!" stated a child.

"Can you help?" wondered another.

I had to explain, that we are observing nature, and if we can only see the event magnified on the screen, then we are unable to assist, as our fingers are too big and would injure the bug.

This explanation made sense to the children, and we patiently waited until we could see that the bug had been successful in removing the white thing.

In the days that followed some children started to reflect why some birds, would eat insects.





The concept that nature is precious, and nature needs nature to survive is still challenging the minds of the children.

"Why do they eat them?"

"But, THAT'S NATURE, Britta!"

One morning, an educator spotted a small spider in the surrounding bushes of our sandpit.

It looked as if it was a white tip spider but soon the educator noticed its beautiful sliver body with black markings.

The spider was carefully removed from our communal areas and released into the bushes out of reach for the children.

By connecting with professional curators and scientists, I have gained further confidence to model that it is OK to not know everything living in our garden. By being able to ask others who have more knowledge than myself and patiently wait for their answers to my questions will hopefully inspire the children's desire to find out more and problem-solve along the way to discover satisfactory feedback in years to come.

I am pleased to share that the "silver spider" has been identified with the help of my new friends as

"Leucauge Dromedaria or Humped Silver Orb Spider, which is a docile, reluctant to bite, not dangerous-to-humans-type of orb weaver.

In a traditional preschool, most of the learning takes place inside the classroom. At Stepping Stones, we regularly celebrate our beautiful natural environment and embed these into the children's learning process. The skill of being able to allow oneself to connect with nature, took time to develop. During the past years we could see a shift in the children's mindset when engaging with nature which was regarded as a disposable, always availed to be used or a misused thing. Nowadays many children have developed a deep respectful and responsible mindset for nature's beauty and wonder.

The children's mindset changed from a quick spoken, "YUCK," or, "That's disgusting," nature stomping and crushing mindset, to a carefully observing, curious mindset. And with this the loud declaration, "Nature!" or "Come quickly, I found nature!" started.

Nowadays our neighbours can hear this call often and I can only hope that they can find as much

delight as the children, as they embrace the wonders of nature and develop their stewardship for the everything living.

When connecting with nature each child naturally develops its love for nature and starts to explore and discover on its own terms the crucial role that nature plays in our life. Some children have started to request their parents to remove unfamiliar therefore rare and precious insects from tires of their cars before diving off, "Can you save it?"

Currently we can notice a shift in the children's thinking how nature engages with other creatures, in particular when observing birds eating ants, beetles or caterpillars. The concept of life cycles and the significant changes it entails challenges and stimulates the children's thinking and understanding of the world they live in and links and often extends their work cycle knowledge with new life cycle concepts.

With the spontaneous addition of our visiting rainbow lorikeets, we are attempting to install a keen sense and need for respectful and responsible interaction with these curious birds.

The children are required to sit down and observe from a safe distance when we are feeding the birds and start to develop their skills in supporting nature without making nature depending on us humans. "Only, 3 spoonsful, Britta!" and "Put lots of water, mix it all in for them to eat," or, "Quick - they are hungry! Make the bird porridge," are frequently the children's instructions when the bird food is being prepared. By providing time, space, respect and care and the children with the responsibility to spot the birds, call out the recipe for the 'bird porridge' a powerful sense of care and ownership has developed among all children at Stepping Stones. The magic happens when the children sit down and patiently watch the birds feed, as the birds lick up their supplemental food the children slow down, self-calm and refocus.

"Sit at the grass," "Sit down!" or "Come back - sit down!" "Don't scare him!" "Be quiet!" and "Don't move, he will go away!" are some of the corrective instructions the children give their peers who either venture too close to our feeding locations or attempt to scare the birds.

Increasingly more Casa children will call me to urgently identify and observe with them birds and insects. By inviting an adult to join their discovery



the children express an increased sense of confidence. And it is obvious that the children will eagerly ask questions to link what they observed with their pre-existing knowledge. Through these conversations, the language of some children has become more descriptive and their focus and awareness have increased when observing more closely and in detail nature in action.

I am immensely proud of how our community of children has started to increasingly and spontaneously express care, empathy, and concern for our native environment and I am hopeful that some of our children will continue to grow into confident environmentally aware citizens who feel empowered to make a difference. And it is becoming apparent that a lot of personal growth and learning has occurred.

During the past few months some of our local butcherbirds have become key role models to the children as they flew in with insects in their beaks to safeguard over some crumbs. To the children's surprise the butcherbirds would eat their natural food first before they ate their treats of crumbs from our Morning Tea.

Some children observed how an older bird was teaching a younger bird how to revisit the location where the crumbs had been located to search for leftovers and small insects who might have been

attracted by the smell of the crumbs.

During these observations, the children also heard different birdcalls and started to notice that they are several types of calls for varied reasons.

Some children 'translated' as they attempted to distinguish the different calls, "I am here- come to me - I found food," and the begging sound of a younger butcherbird was translated to, "Feed me - feed me - I am hungry."

I am truly grateful for the Casa children's increasing wonder, awareness and desire to investigate and explore something new. They are becoming great ambassadors for our younger children at Stepping Stones and I can increasingly see how eagerly younger children are copying their actions and questions on our spontaneous incursions and attempt to confidently share their knowledge with us.

I am most grateful that I am learning and discovering each day something together with the children and I can sense that the seeds for strong respect, relationships with nature and its wonders is now deeply embedded within them.



And just as Maria Montessori concluded:

Early childhood education is the key to the betterment of society.

The things he sees are not just remembered; they form a part of his soul.

When children come into contact with nature, they reveal their strength.

The Land is where our roots are. The children must be taught to feel and live in harmony with the earth.

There must be provisions for the child to have contact with nature; to understand and appreciate the order, the harmony and the beauty in nature.

A child, more than anyone else, is a spontaneous observer of nature.

The child who has felt a strong love for his surroundings and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives us reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction.

On these pages I have collated some of the many treasures the children have discovered within the Stepping Stones environments.

Enjoy!

Britta Page
Casa Educator



MEALTIME LEARNING IN TRANSITION CLASS

by Sandra Sin (Directress of Transition and Toddler program)

Maria Montessori believed that mealtime is a valuable learning opportunity for children. On Monday and Tuesday mornings, we run a 2-day program for a small group of toddlers attending the Transition class.

After saying goodbye to their parents/carers at the door, children are excited to be greeted by their teachers and peers as they walk in the room by themselves. After putting a piece of fruit from home in the basket, they quickly wash their hands before choosing a piece from the basket to prepare for their morning tea. One child may choose to bake, and another child may decide to cut up an apple or a banana. Some children may take up the challenge of scooping some kiwi fruit or washing blueberries with a salad spinner.

When the food preparation is finished, children learn to resist the temptation to consume it straight away but rather choose to leave the bowl on a trolley for morning teatime. As they cover the bowl with a cloth, they begin to acknowledge that what they have prepared is for everybody to be shared later.

Every child in the class loves having some orange juice at teatime, which will involve them cutting up some oranges and squeezing out the juice with all their might. This process of preparation extends their patience because they learn to slow down and wait as we count to 10 and clap our hands together.

When children are reminded that it is nearly morning teatime, it's wonderful to see how they take initiative to set up the morning tea table and proceed to help one another. As children are interested in observing what their peers are doing and want to be part of the group, once we have one or two children initiate the setup, everybody in the class ends up wanting to join in and help out. While some children lay the placemats on the table, some will practise grace of movement and visual discrimination by placing breakable child-sized dishes and glasses, spoons, and forks on the placemats with printed shapes.

When the morning tables are ready, one child will ring the bell to remind their peers to wash their hands before sitting down. As we wait for everybody to finish washing their hands, we hold a song card in our hands to show each other that we are ready and waiting for our friends to join the table despite the fact that we are all very hungry at that point.

After singing the song, acknowledging every child's contribution in preparing food and setting up the tables, we then pass the food bowls and jugs around so that children can take turns to serve themselves

“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



and enjoy the result of their hard work together. We practise grace and courtesy when we ask each other to pass the food and drinks around and consider each other’s needs through conversation. An example of this is how we only take a small amount at a time and then pass the bowl/pitcher to our friend who has not had a turn yet. Spills are a normal part of mealtime - when they occur, children learn to wipe them up and begin to understand that it’s natural and normal to make mistakes. This process helps cultivate experimentation and self esteem in long term. Of course, the work cycle will only finish when everyone washes up their own utensils and tidies up the tables.

Through the daily experience of organising and sharing food at morning teatime, children experience the benefit of working cooperatively, develop respect and a sense of belonging, gain ownership and control over their meals and eventually promote their health as they are more likely to become happy and healthy eaters.







WELCOME BACK SOIREE

by Marilyn Williams
(Music Teacher)

Late this term we welcomed back our live, open air evening soiree.

Children have been busily preparing solo pieces to play and creating small ensembles including a Brass Fanfare, Clarinet Ensemble as well as our Band and String Group. I had forgotten the buzz around soirees generated by the energy and enthusiasm of the kids. This term it also feels like we have a new sense of appreciation that our ability to run these events cannot be taken for granted.

This will be our first soiree also to use our new portable stage and lights. This fantastic new equipment helped make our 6-9 and 9-12 production more professional. Thank you Adam for making this happen.





WALK THE LINE

As the year 2020 comes to an end, I am moved by the children's resilience. Their awareness of current events and how it affects their social development this year has not deterred them from forming bonds and strengthening their friendships.

by Margret Ranada Palma (Brolga, 3-6 Directress)

I have had frequent visits to the physiotherapist lately due to injuries from a sport I probably should stop playing on a weekly basis. But as far as hobbies, interests and passions go, this is one I cannot give up just yet, as long as my mind and body will it. This is akin to my being a Montessori teacher. It is something I chose to do knowing it was my calling as well as my choice. There is a whole point to this...so bear with me.

One of the exercises I was asked to do was to walk in a straight line, heel to toe. Okay...sure. As I began with my left foot, I said to myself: "Easy-peasy. I show the children in class how to walk on the line." Then, on my second step with my right foot, I started to wobble. Oh. The physio told me to keep going and questioned if I was exaggerating my movements at all. Due to a rolled ankle during a game, I sprained my right foot without my awareness. As a result, I had weak ankles that causes an imbalance. I found my footing eventually but with less confidence. She then asked me to close my eyes as I walk in a straight-line heel to toe. Now that next

challenge affected my equilibrium. This time I was not exaggerating my movements.

I often wonder when I sit down and observe the children with a clear mind, free of judgments, how they manage to absorb everything around them. Theoretically, I know how they do it. Realistically, I am constantly amazed by what I see and hear. As the year 2020 comes to an end, I am moved by the children's resilience. Their awareness of current events and how it affects their social development this year has not deterred them from forming bonds and strengthening their friendships. You hear them saying: "I can't hug you now, because you know... 'coronavirus'!" or "You can't sit so close to me, because we need to social distance." This saddens me as I listen to the five-year-old children with their growing vocabulary that include modern pandemic-related phrases. Every morning, they greet each other with reminders such as: "Wash your hands!" instead of a hello. This is the new normal. This has become a part of the routine in a normalised environment with our normalised children.

Who are these normalised children?

These are the children who have a love of order.

In our environment, the children learn that everything has its place. If it's moved elsewhere, the children know where to put them back. "Come, I'll show you." Is one of the phrases you'll hear from the children teaching someone else, where they can find scissors or where to put things back properly.





They walk the line not out of routine. They do so because this is what creates a peaceful and calm environment.

These are the children who have a *love of work*.

They are the ones who want to read the definition cards of our biology cards, who will make booklets, and draw a picture on the front cover, and copy the definitions on lined paper within days to complete the project they chose to work on.

These are the children who have *deep unprompted concentration*.

They are the ones who have reached an inner focus. The ones who continue to work even when the lights have been switched off and the children get ready for group time to either have lunch or go home at the end of the work cycle. "I'm not yet hungry. I want to finish counting my beads." One cannot interrupt this child's spontaneous decision to complete his own work cycle.

These are the children who are *attached to reality*.

They are able to distinguish what is real or fantasy, fact or fiction. "The snake can't bite the sun! That story is just pretend!"

These are the children who *love silence and working alone*.

Pair work and small group work are often seen in the environment, apart from children working alongside each other individually, but this characteristic is apparent when children ask each other to stop interrupting their work as they are trying to focus, not because of an adult watching them or reminding them, but out of their own volition. A toddler came to visit our classroom one day and announced as he entered the room: "I'm here to visit my best girl. Which class are you going?" He was a very articulate young boy and the six-year-old girl said: "I already told you which class I'm going to. I just want to focus on my work and be quiet." She carried on with her Subtraction Strip Board as the child stood next to her and watched her. "You're disturbing me."

These are the children who have *redirected the possessive nature through learning to be patient and wait their turn until a certain activity or equipment is free*.

"I want to wait till the Binomial Cube is back on the shelf. I think someone is using it." Sometimes you would see the child having a search in the classroom to see who has it and watches patiently with their hands behind their backs while the manipulative is being used. In this instance, the child sits at the table contentedly.

These are the children who are *obedient*.

Maria Montessori has talked about the three levels of obedience. This is the stage of development when the children freely obey the guide or the adult in the classroom, with enthusiasm and willingness when a request, redirection or instruction is given. One of the requests would sound like this: "Kindly take out the lunch bags as it's nearly lunch time." With such zeal, the child responds: "Can I take out the mat too and lay it out for our picnic?"

These are the children who *take initiative and are independent in making their choices*.

They are the ones who have chosen to take up challenges and cannot be interrupted for the choices they make. They want to complete the activity. A child has chosen to work on the Division Unit Bead Board almost every day for a whole week, repeatedly counting her green beads. "I did 81 the other day, and 36 yesterday. I want to try sharing 56 today...because this is fun. I'm starting to get it."

These are the children who are *commonly helpful and cooperative*.

They are the ones who do not think of contests and competitions. "It's not a race" is a statement you would usually hear from an older child or a child who has been in the environment for some time. You will often witness children helping each other out with aprons being fastened, shoelaces being tied, or coats and jackets



hung on our coat rack. They help each other when they see that the younger children need assistance without being asked to do so.

These are the children who are *naturally self-disciplined*.

They are self-directed in their work choices, happily perfecting their movements through repetition without any adult instruction. They have a plan in their mind as they start their day and they navigate around the classroom with confidence and self-motivation.

These are the children who are *joyful*.

They are the children who work purposefully in the classroom. They radiate happiness as they work in our environment. They love to come to school.

As the term comes to an end, these normalised children are testament to the reasons why I teach. They walk the line not out of routine. They do so because this is what creates a peaceful and calm environment. With or without the music that we play to signal the children at the end of the work cycle, they still walk on the line spontaneously throughout the day to practice their own movements, rhythm and balance in order to control their own bodies, eventually learning their own self-control.

Why do I walk the line? Hopefully, this time to really listen, be aware, and through repetition, eventually heal and strengthen to avoid injury, and lastly build resilience. Walking on the line is, after all, an exercise in movement and self-control, as the normalised children have shown us.



COMMUNITY IN 6-9

by Sarah Bazylenko (Gunyah, 6-9 Directress)

On Production night, another staff member commented that 6-9 has a great sense of community. As the children completed their dances, they congratulated each other saying, "Good job!" patting each other on the back and giving high fives. While they watched their peers, they quietly did the moves while seated. The sense of community in 6-9 is apparent in many areas, across both classrooms.



The second plane is like a training ground where the child gets to train for their life in the wider community. All the characteristics they exhibit - being tougher, stronger and taking care of his / herself relate to their need to eventually leave their family. The second plane child forms community groups with other children in the classroom, neighbourhood and in all other activities they are part of, due to the fact that they want to be together with other children. These groups are not necessarily made up of children of the same age and the strongest groupings are usually those containing children from the ages of 7 - 10 years.

Children are working on developing a moral code when forming community groups. These practice societies that the children manage by making and working out the rules are the first outside societies that the children have freely joined and that is outside of their own families.

During circle time (where we discuss topics as a whole group), the children learn a variety of lessons

both academic, social and emotional. We aim to give the children skills that they will need for life such as resilience, listening and learning about values. The children are encouraged to be grateful for the earth and towards humanity. Through this vision, we can help children understand that despite differences in culture and ways of doing things, humanity is fundamentally one entity.

At the end of the day, the children pack away and do their jobs. In the second plane, this is another aspect of developing responsibility. In the Casa children did care of individual parts of the environment but there were also adults helping. Now the children look at a job chart and do specific jobs independently. Our sense of community goes beyond this though. If there is a child away, children volunteer to do their job. If someone needs extra help with their job, a volunteer peer helps that child. We work together to care for the environment as a group. Rather than just focusing on cleaning their own work up, the children recognise that caring for the environment helps the whole community for which they

"The universe is an imposing reality, and an answer to all questions. We shall walk together on this path of life, for all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."

DR. MONTESSORI, TO EDUCATE THE HUMAN POTENTIAL, P.5 - 6



are a part of and responsible for. Their understanding of a common goal blossoms throughout their time in 6-9 and onwards into 9-12.

As new children enter the classroom, the older and more experienced peers help with the transition. They show the children the shelves and help them identify materials they may have seen previously in the Casa. The experienced child shows the new child the expectations for work such as selecting a range of work choices and appropriate noise level in the classroom. This reinforces the class expectations for the older child and sets the new child up for success.

During news, the children share their experiences outside the classroom. The children listen and ask creative and imaginative questions, sharing in the excitement of the child who has brought in a treasure or a story to share. The freedom of expression experienced by the children paired with the responsibility of respecting the child presenting in 6-9 is a joy to witness.

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members". - Coretta Scott King

This is not a definitive list of how community is built in 6-9, rather a small number of examples. It is intrinsic in everything we do and how we are with the children on a day-to-day basis. Montessori's view was to develop a micro society in our classrooms and schools to show the children the way towards a peaceful society in adult life. This is achieved throughout all authentic Montessori classrooms everyday dependant on the needs of the child and plane the child is in.



OOSH NEWS

BEFORE, AFTER SCHOOL CARE & HOLIDAY PROGRAM

by Surendrini Giritharan (OOSH)

It has been a very challenging year and I am sure that we will all be pleased to see 2020 come to a close.

We had a smooth start for our Term 4 seeing our regular BSC & ASC children coming back with lots of energy.

We also had Henry starting at the end of term 3, he got into the routine and understood our regular afternoon program. He is also getting to know most of the other older children and his peers.

We had our Assessment and Rating on the 11th of November. All went well and Adam told us that we received complimentary comments from the assessor. We are hoping to get the best rating ☺

Our daily meditation was a great success which has been going smooth and well. This is to calm and relax the children after school. We have also started with a Yoga practice. It has the fancy name called "Brain Yoga" Lot of research has been done into the area and shown that it really stimulates the brain, especially for children who have learning difficulties or other behavioural issues. The children are very happy to take part in the activity every afternoon just before we start our outside activity.

Our classroom is comprised of multi-age groups. Children aged 3-6 all share a classroom. This is based on Montessori's understanding of children's development. The younger children learn from the older children, who in turn, role model appropriate behaviour and work habits. Peer teaching and sharing of knowledge is encouraged and the older children take great pride and joy from teaching and leading their younger peers.

We provide materials and activities suited to all age groups for the children to make it really enjoyable and become engaged throughout the time they spend in the OOSH room. We also facilitate activities according to their interest and request.

Staff work closely with children who have behavioural issues and also regularly communicate with families to explore ways to help children with their behaviour. Our program covers different aspects of learning in a practical way which creates interest in most of the children.

Each term we do different activities based on the season and incorporate learning in a fun way. This term we organised a lot of spring colour activities. The children participated in a variety of projects where they learnt a lot of life skills.

They also did a project on spring gardening vegetables where they planted "Dwarf Yellow Beans" from seeds and watched the vegetable's life cycle. It was a wonderful learning experience for them.

We always encourage children to spend time on their own to build their confidence and creativity to do anything in their lives. At the same time we organise group indoor games and activities to build their social interaction, sharing and confidence.

Our Thursday cooking program is going well and very popular amongst all age groups. Everyone is looking forward to taking their cook books home by the end of this term to try all the recipes that they have done throughout the whole year during their Christmas break.



This Christmas cooking was different to the cooking in the past and it was greatly loved by all the children.

Now coming to our holiday program which is organised with a variety of fun and learning activities which engage the children's interest, learning and most importantly is still fun!

In general, children love the variety of incursions and all the activities get prepared inhouse but some are always more popular than others. You can see some of the highlights from our last holiday program + our daily afternoon school term projects.

Our last day for this term is 18th December. We are closed from December 19th - January 17th



HOLIDAY PROGRAM

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.
- 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.

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

A, BIG THANK YOU to all our wonderful staff members Christine, Elle, Hyun, Kalpana, Michelle, Rebecca , Sandra, Sarah, Sirisha and Veena. Ladies, without your commitment, cooperation and support the program wouldn't be possible. It was a smooth year without any major hurdles and thanks to all of you for helping make that happen.

Seasons greeting and have a relaxing and safe holiday!

Christine, Elle, Hyun, Kalpana, Michelle, Rebecca, Sarah, Sirisha, Sureni and Veena

TERM 4 IN 9-12



by Leticia Castellanos (Amaroo, 9-12 Directress)

It has been a great term in 9-12, full of work and activities such as debating, gardening, going out, camp, excursions, fundraising projects and production, just to mention some. The children in Orana and Amaroo enthusiastically prepared the play *Mulan*. The weather worked in our favour, and the result was a touching performance with a fabulous audience. Thanks to all the families for their support and especially to those who contributed to making this evening a success.

Year 5 and 6 students put their acting skills into practice and delighted us with their performances. Year 4 contributed enthusiastically through their lovely dances and fun scenes. The children learned through this experience the basic components of a play, such as script construction and character study. They also enjoyed preparing dances, costumes and props. All of this happened while they delved into the story of *Mulan*, awakening in many of them the curiosity to learn more about the Chinese culture and the Huns.

One of the most memorable events of this year in 9-12, without a doubt, was the camp. For two continuous days, the children enjoyed extraordinary activities such as wheelchair basketball, star gazing with telescopes, tie dye and an animation workshop. All this was seasoned with pizza and pancakes. Many thanks to the parents who helped and donated a night to make this incredible experience possible for the children.

The year 6 children continued with their debates, showing great responsibility and commitment in their speeches. Thanks to their efforts, they managed to continue until the last stage of this activity across different schools in the country. It was wonderful to see them putting their speaking and argumentation skills to use. They were a great role model for their younger peers.

Taking care of pets has been another important activity of 9-12. The students have received, with great excitement, new four-legged members in their environments: Thank you to the Spencer family for the donation of a guinea pig and to Adam for taking the children into the adventure of getting the axolotls. The children have shown great responsibility into the care these animals need, and it has been very pleasant to see them enthusiastically make observations and research on their characteristics. The children also worked very hard to prepare the school garden beds. It was very lovely to see a human chain at work to transfer a truck of soil into the garden frames.

A Surf Live Saving excursion at the end of the term provided the students with opportunities to develop their skills in water safety and to continue appreciating the nature and beach culture in Australia.

2020 will be a hard year to forget. We thank everyone for working through an exceptional time altogether. In 9-12, we wish all our families a relaxed holiday and a great New Year.





VOCABULARY

by Darine Groch (Learning Support)

Vocabulary begins with oral language. 5-6 year olds know between 2500-5000 words. Students learn about 3000-4000 words per year.

The more words a child knows the easier it is to learn more words. The more one thinks about and discusses words the 'oilier' or easier it becomes. Networking in the brain improves and connects with other things. It becomes about making connections with the known.

Vocalising words is important. This links meaning, articulation and speed of retrieval.

Vocabulary knowledge is both highly predictive of, and reflective of, engagement in wide reading. It is both a cause and consequence of reading success.

Vocabulary size is important: research shows the more words you know, the more successful you are in life.

There are 3 layers to vocabulary instruction:

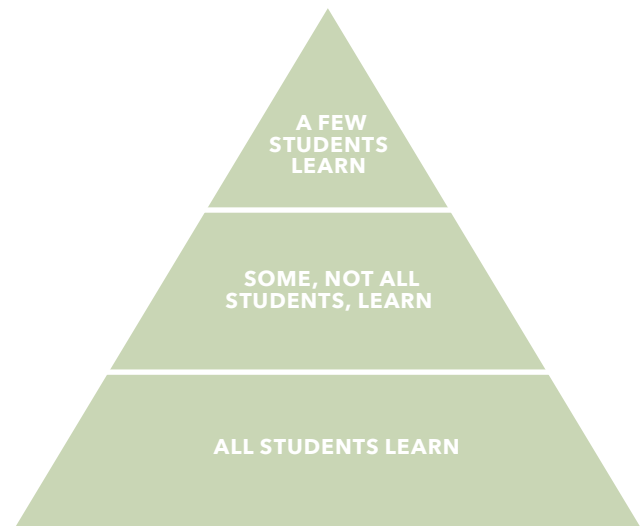
1. **Encoding** - introducing new words
2. **Storage** - practice makes permanent. It's important to encourage children to speak the words.
3. **Retrieval** - reviewing words for automaticity (think filing cabinet).

New words need to be 'played around with' multiple (7-20) times to be internalised and committed to memory.

Good decoding but poor comprehension often stems from poor vocabulary.

Morphology (the study of words and their parts eg. base words, prefixes, suffixes) is important.

Word Pyramid



The more we read and talk to children about their reading the better their learning. Pictures are important as they display word consciousness, e.g. aggression, reluctance, fear, dismay. You can use words to personalise, e.g. say to the child "Tell me a time when you were meticulous, when you improvised etc.

Visit Wordsmiths (creators of words in history), e.g. Shakespeare, Dr Seuss, Lewis Carroll.

So, go on, get talking, get reading and have some fun!





NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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

STEPPING STONES MONTESSORI LONG DAY CARE

196 BOBBIN HEAD ROAD TURRAMURRA NSW 2074
WWW.STEPPINGSTONESMONTESSORI.COM.AU