

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL - EARLY LEARNING, PRIMARY & SECONDARY

CHRONICLE

WINTER

ART EXPERIENCE
IN TODDLER
PROGRAM

NMUN NORTHSIDE
MODEL UNITED
NATIONS 2022



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A WEALTH OF OPPORTUNITY



It is hard to believe that we are already in the middle of the year, 2022 seems to be going by so quickly. Despite the challenges of Covid and with the steady easing of restrictions, we have been able to see an increase in activity of events around the school. These activities begin to make the school year feel quite normal.

Term 2 has been especially busy, but this has also been a time where our school, like many others have been impacted by the on going effects of Covid, as well as the beginning of the flu season. With the onset of colder weather, we have seen a number of staff and students absent from school for periods due to illness. It seems a while since we have had colds and flu like we have begun to see again this term; lock downs and Covid seemed to have kept them at bay.

In the early part of this term, our Northside Montessori Society held its Annual General Meeting for 2022. At this event two of our schools long standing Board members stepped down from their position on the Board. Sharon Bowman, our Board Chair and Stuart Parker have been Board members at Northside Montessori school over the past 10-20 years and have served our school community in so many ways. Their contributions to our School and Early Learning Centre have been extremely valuable over this time.

At the meeting there was opportunity to appoint two new Board members to our school Board.

The two parents who have now joined our Board are Marguerite Fitzgerald and Marcel Kaba. They will join our existing Board members of Felipe Garcia (Board Chair), Vince Scappatura (Deputy Chair), Ian Carlson



(Secretary), David Gay (Finance Committee Chair), Chandandeep Kaur, Emma Forester, and Shaun Ray. We are very thankful for the work of all our parents in the community, and especially grateful to have parents serving on our school Board.

It has been wonderful to see our newly established adolescent program doing amazing things as part of their classwork over these past two terms. One key event in Term 2 was a Science Inquiry and History Mystery evening. Students in the Adolescent program researched and presented historical mysteries of missing persons, lost civilisations and natural phenomena offering current theories and their own possible solutions to these mysteries. On the same evening parents also had the opportunity to see the student's science investigations around rocketry, aerodynamics, friction and molecular gastronomy. It was very clear that the students had focused on producing a controlled and measurable experiment, with many problems to solve along the way. This was one of many highlights this term in our Adolescent program.





Another exciting opportunity since restrictions have eased is our ability to resume parents education events for our families. These allow parents the chance to hear more about Montessori Education and how this works within our classrooms. Moving beyond the theoretical, these events provide an insight into the materials and classroom practice which cannot be gleaned from a book. In Term 2 our focus was on the development of Language Across the Cycles.

On this evening we had four of our staff from the various Cycles in our school present stages of the development of language and the materials that are used to move the child from the concrete experience to the abstract. Margret Palma from Cycle 1 (3-6), Linda Van Lierop from Cycle 2 (6-9), Bec Grimshaw from Cycle 3 (9-12) and Margaret Kroegeer, from our Adolescent Program, all explored the progression of language through the wonderfully developed Montessori materials linking one cycle's development to the next. It was wonderful to see the cohesion and continuity that exists across the classes in our Montessori community.

In Term 2 we were able to finally hold a Working Bee, no Covid restrictions or wet weather! The event in Term 2 was well attended by parents, and there was a lot of cleaning and general maintenance undertaken.

Taking care of our school environment is very important, and it is wonderful that our families are able to contribute in this way, working with other community members to achieve a great result.

The term has continued at full speed with our Northside Model United Nations (included in this issue), a camp to the Central Coast for our Adolescent program, our Term 2 Soiree, Combined Montessori Schools Athletics Carnival, excursions and also the Cycle 3 camp to Canberra in the last week of Term. It is so nice to part of such a vibrant and active learning community; Northside is always moving and enjoying the many opportunities that Montessori Education has to offer.

Adam Scotney
Principal



ART EXPERIENCE IN TODDLER PROGRAM

by Sandra Sin (Toddler Transition)

Art is a powerful experience that provides young children opportunities to develop their imagination, communicate their feelings and express themselves from a truly unique perspective.

Through an array of art experiences, the development of children's creative, visual, sensorial, emotional and fine is supported and promoted in our Montessori environment. In this term, an assortment of media such as watercolour paints, crayons, chalk, decoupage and paints are made accessible for children's exploration, experimentation and creative expression at their own pace and level.

Out of all the forms of artistic media provided, painting continues to be one of the most popular modes of expression that many children explore their creativity through. With joy and excitement, children plunge into the pigments provided with a brush (and often with their hands), gliding, swooping, skimming along, changing paper into a play space aglow with colour. In the rhythm and flow of painting, their whole body is involved as their vision and movement intertwine.

Through painting, children learn another way of perceiving and creating. As they paint, they transform a sheet of paper into rivers of colour and bring a blank

canvas into motion and life. Painting is also about making visual magic and being surprised by colours appearing, changing and disappearing as they add layers upon layers of colour onto what was once a blank piece of paper.

At first, very young children often paint simple a patch of colour. For beginners, learning how to get a brush out of the pot and onto the paper – not on the easel – before putting it back into the same pot is often challenge enough. They may stick to one colour and ignore the rest, as a beautiful colour by itself can be wondrous to a young toddler. On the other hand, some toddlers use three or more primary colours and manage most of the time to keep them separate.

Children gradually realise that a mark can stand for something. Initially they may find meaning rather than set out deliberately to create it. It's a special moment when children find they can make a line go around and return to its starting point. This enclosed shape can stand for anything – an action, a sound, a face or a body. Gradually, children add other lines and place small shapes inside and around it to create an image: a depiction of a memory or an imagined entity.

In time, they begin to explore the entire expanse of their paper canvas. They make short strokes, dots and irregular patches, often filling in spaces between forms. They discover how to make new colours through mixing primary colours; and many delight in creating separate areas of colour close to each other but not overlapping.



"If we try to think back to the dim and distant past... what is it that helps us reconstruct those times, and to picture the lives of those who lived in them? It is their art... It is thanks to the hand, the companion of the mind, that civilization has arisen."

- Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

Painting is much more than making pictures but placing oneself within a painting and becoming one with its contents. Once children finish painting, they may not feel the need to keep the product. It is the journey and process that gives them satisfaction and inner joy that encapsulates the individual joys of artmaking, as some children will take more pride may be taken in the form of creating rather than displaying. Through learning to use the paint, forming lines, shapes, secondary colours, the growing child becomes enamoured with the processes of learning and creating through artmaking in our Montessori environment.







THE MONTESSORI PROGRAM AND A TRADITIONAL PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM HELPING PARENTS MAKE A CHOICE

by Edna Salvador (3-6 Kookaburra Directress)

There is such a misunderstanding about Montessori education, it is difficult to know where to begin. It is probably best to outline for the parents the value of what stands out in a Montessori program, that of the mixed age groups, individualised lessons, small group work, large group work and sequential activity.

The idea of mixed ages in one classroom is not very common to most parents and they usually picture chaos and disharmony. In actual fact, the mixed ages provide opportunities for the older children to be models for the younger ones, and to help and protect them in difficult times. The younger children look up to the older ones, and by seeing them do the advanced work, become indirectly prepared to do the same work when they are older. They relish being invited by an older child to help set up the bank or put away the long chains. The older ones benefit by earning the respect of the younger children and seeing that their

skills and knowledge are helpful and interesting to other children. This makes them even more protective of the younger children adding to the familial sense in the classroom. Academically, all the children benefit. With a mixed age group, there are no limits to the work that the children can do. Young children who advance quickly academically can do so without fanfare. Older children who need more repetition can do so without feeling that they are behind. There are no limits to the work anyone can do, so the children see themselves as unique learners and in the process learn to appreciate the strengths and talents of the children around them.

Individualised lessons allow the directress to give the lesson the way it best suits the child receiving it. If the child is especially verbal and does not take note of details visually, then the directress will give the lesson in a way that will make the child take notice the details of the presentation by emphasizing points of interest (a point of interest is something that will direct the child's attention to the activity). If the child speaks little or no English, the teacher will give the lesson using the vocabulary that the child needs to learn. If the child is easily distracted, the teacher will set up the lesson in an area of the classroom where there are few distractions. Individualised lessons assure us that the children are getting the material presented to them in the best



possible manner for each individual. After giving an individualised lesson, the teacher will know if the child needs a re-presentation by the way the child used the equipment when it was his turn. This may not be as readily apparent if the lesson were given to a large group.

Some lessons lend themselves to small group work. Vocabulary lessons and Cultural lessons come to mind. In these small groups, the children can be given information, then allowed to discuss it in order to help them begin the process of applying the information to the outside world. This small group prepares them for later learning situations that will be entirely group experiences. They learn how to gather their thoughts, wait for their turn to speak, ask questions and stick to the topic at hand.

The large group work is usually for reading of stories and singing songs or celebration purposes. Although these experiences are not a major part of the child's school routine, they do prepare him for later schooling by allowing him to learn about sitting with a large group and focusing on the adult in charge. They also learn the guidelines for expressing themselves in a large group by taking a turn and listening to others.

The sequential presentation of materials is an aspect that is of great importance and should be emphasized. It can be an important selling point. By showing parents a part of a sequence, they can see how only one degree of difficulty at a time is added with each step. They can easily see this in the Language materials up through the Moveable Alphabet. A shorter example would be to show them the three colour boxes and how they are used. First the child is shown just the primary colours. Then when the child is familiar with these, the secondary and tertiary colours are presented. To further cement the concept of colours, the children play distance games and finally they apply the concept to their environment by getting objects from the classroom that match the colour tablets. It is important to stress that the children are allowed to repeat these activities as often and as long as they wish. In a traditional setting the children usually have a set amount of time to work on something, then everyone in the group moves on to something else. Most parents appreciate the freedom that the repetition of activity allows the children in the class.





CREATIVITY IN THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

by Margret Ranada Palma (Brolga Directress)

Creativity (noun) the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness.

How is creativity honed in a Montessori classroom? Is it through art and craft activities that are available on the shelf?

There is an array of different medium such as water colour, oil pastels, acrylic paint, markers, crayons, coloured pencils, modelling clay, and play dough. There are also sewing activities for the children to use: sewing and pinning cards, mesh and jute material, button sewing, pillow sewing and others.

These are preliminary exercises that the children are able to do to prepare their hand, mind and will for order, coordination, concentration and independence. It is through the encounters they have in their prepared environment that they begin to repeat these exercises

from the initial presentation of a Montessori material or an activity to the nth time they work with it that they are able to gain different perspectives of their own work.

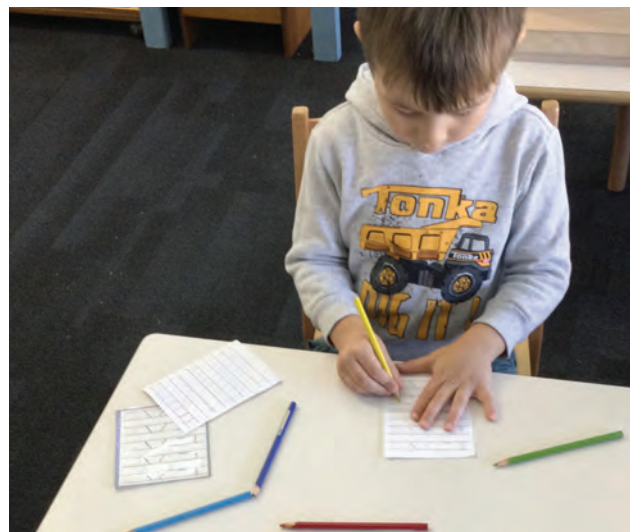
This repetition allows them to internalise what they are doing as they are handed the keys to unlock what lies beneath. The children's continuous and uninterrupted purposeful exploration of the materials in the other learning areas of Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Culture pave the way to infinite possibilities that allow the children's imagination to take place.

It is not only through their individual exploration or partnership work that they learn to let their creativity flow, but it is also through their socialisation with their friends in the mixed age groups and the interactions they have through their own observations and absorption of their surroundings ground them to experiences based on the reality presented in their prepared environment.



"The human hand allows
the mind to reveal itself."

- Dr Marie Montessori



MUSIC AT NORTHSIDE 2022

by Marilyn Williams (Music Teacher)

It has been great to see confidence and enthusiasm for music singing and performing return in the classroom. In Choir we have welcomed many new members this term as well as new starters in the Instrumental Band Program.

The 3-6 children have been busy learning new dances and songs. They have been preparing for Term 2 Soiree. This term we will welcome any 3-6 children able to attend the Soiree to open with 'Mi Cuerpo Hace Musica' and 'I Can Sing a Rainbow'. For some of the younger ones this can be their first experience of performing in front of people and I am always appreciative of our lovely, warm community audience in making sure this is a positive experience.

In the Primary Classes music is broken up into theory and composing as well as practical instrumental playing and singing. The students learn a variety of instruments from Glockenspiel, Recorder, Ukeleles and Keyboards.

The 9-12 students are able to choose music to share with the group. I encourage everyone to listen and analyse the choices respectfully and always love hearing the wider selection of styles that are chosen.

Music in the Adolescent Class

The Year 7's started the year with the study of prehistoric Music completing beautiful presentations of early instruments from around the world. This term we are moving into Ancient Music and the introduction of notation of music.

Additionally, as part of their practical instrumental playing they have started group guitar lessons with Adam Black which they are thoroughly enjoying.



THE INTELLECTUAL EXPLORERS OF THE UNIVERSE

Psychological Characteristics in the Second Plane of Development (6-12 years)

by Leticia Castellanos (Amaroo 9-12 Directress)

In primary (6-12 years old), or what Maria Montessori called the second plane of development, the child continues with his own construction and moral development. This is the period of the acquisition of culture and the birth of the social person. At this age, the child's interest goes beyond the four walls of the classroom. The child needs to understand what happens outside the environment, explore the society and have experiences related to their group or culture.

In the pre-primary environment, the child was focused on building himself, but now he is attracted to being with others, he wants to form groups and interact with people outside his family environment. In the school, the adult who is inside the environment is the connection between the child and this space. This teacher or guide is the one who puts the child in contact with the universe and everything it contains. It is important to remember that at this age the child uses his intelligence and imagination to understand and explore everything around him.

In this level of development, children have a set of specific characteristics that help them in their self-construction and support them to adapt to their new reality. Our approach at work will no longer be sensorial, although we will continue to handle concrete material to reach the concepts, the materials in a primary environment must be used to favour the

children's reasoning. Many materials have already been used in previous stages, but their use and function are different and more complex. An excellent example of this is the binomial and trinomial cubes. In the first cycle, these materials are used in a sensorial way, however, in primary, these same materials acquire an arithmetical and algebraic meaning.

Children of primary are no longer satisfied with what is in the classroom, they search for the reason and logic behind everything. They go beyond everything they can see and touch. They become intellectual explorers of the universe. One of the characteristics is that they tend to separate from their family, the need to find a social group and start living experiences that will be useful to them in the future. The child's new group is his friends, and they can become more important than family. The children are interested in belonging to society, and their horizons expand beyond their immediate family. Sometimes, their behaviour is guided more by their friends than by what their parents say. They become more careless with their personal appearance; their shoelaces are commonly undone. Little enthusiasm to bathe or brush their teeth is another characteristic. Good manners and courtesy also frequently disappear. There is roughness, and the delicacy of the previous stage disappears. This is preparing them for their independence.



Another characteristic is that they become physically more resistant. They are healthier as they have developed immunity to the diseases of the previous period. It is a preparation of nature so that children can face the world outside their family. If they get scratched or hurt, they don't want to care, they become bolder.

The great interest in socialising is something characteristic of the stage. Children form groups with other children of the same age or other ages. The group of children will have their own rules, language, and even customs. They will organise and create their own patterns of behaviour to be part of that group. They can even have a secret language. They develop rules and codes, which is the beginning of moral development. It allows them to experiment with how to live in a social group so that when they become part of the society, they will have acquired those skills. They also wonder why people act this or that way, or what is right or wrong. At first, it is very common for them to accuse others, they want to see the adult's reaction to contrast what they think with what the adult thinks; They want to know what is fair or what is unfair. They are forming a sense of justice, the formation of their moral judgment.

A sense of responsibility is another characteristic. In Montessori, we provide the child with stories about the laws that govern the Universe. We explain how all creatures follow certain rules and how this can ensure

harmony in the Universe or on Earth. This gives them a sense of responsibility and morality in a more conscious way. Through all the work of primary, children can see that all human beings and nature have a task to fulfil, it is that Montessori calls Mission or Cosmic Task. Knowing that all beings have a Cosmic Task to ensure the existence of everything will help children to continue with their own construction and realise that they may have a mission to fulfil.

In the primary years, the children can learn what has happened in the Universe, the Earth and all the work that the human beings had carried out. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge, we aim for a sense of gratitude to the first human beings and all their legacy we have received from them. By realising that we all have a mission, they develop more awareness of the cause and effect of their actions.

The 6-12 children also enjoy working on large projects which is noticeable when they make a division the size of the whiteboard, an elaborated cube root problem, or create a large model or map. They need work that requires great effort and emotion. They must have the possibility to carry out this big work now when the capacity to abstract and the imagination flourish. This is going to happen if the children have the opportunity to choose and create.

ADOLESCENT MONTESSORI EDUCATION. WHAT DO THE RESEARCHERS SAY?



by Margaret Kroeger (Ngamuru Directress)

Recently, I came across an excellent article on the value of a Montessori education for Adolescents. Compiled by staff at Montessori Orlando Montessori Bilingual Academy, the article raised some interesting reasons why a Montessori education benefits Adolescents as they step towards adulthood.

Montessori programs for Adolescents are on the rise both in Australia and internationally. There is a strong interest among parents and educators, and for good reason! Montessori Adolescents experience a rich educational setting that is unlike anything found in conventional education today.

The best news? Montessori Adolescent Programs are backed by research.

Montessori Programs lead the way in supporting Adolescent autonomy, competence and self-determination.

Based on past research that has shown strong correlations between self-determination and achievement, this study sought to measure the

former in seventh-grade students. Data collection relied on student voice, a measure that researchers state to be the most valuable in making decisions regarding education. A guiding question of the study, which examined how these seventh graders acclimated to their new environment, was, "How would a learning environment designed to support students' development of autonomy, competence, and relatedness affect their sense of self-determination during their seventh-grade year?"

The BNSW-S (the Basic Needs Satisfaction at Work Scale) was modified so that the wording was applicable to students. Student volunteers then completed the survey and their scores were used to determine their various levels of self-determination (below, at, and above-expected levels).

Students in the study were asked specific, open-ended questions that necessitated a narrative response. After transcribing and analyzing the interviews, some of the most commonly shared thoughts and themes were as follows:



- Choose type of work
- Choose order of tasks
- Scared at first...now I can
- Organize time
- More Social Confidence
- Capability to do well in high school
- Teacher care: help me stay on top of things
- Student care: community meeting

Several interesting themes emerged. It was clear that all student participants had a strong sense of choice in their school experience. Another interesting finding is that students overwhelmingly spoke about the support they received from their teachers.

Researcher, Casquejo Johnston, suggests that conventional mainstream educators of middle school students who are interested in reform consider finding ways to implement personalized learning and community support, both of which are hallmarks of Montessori Adolescent Programs and can be attributed to the study's positive findings.

In Montessori Adolescent Programs STEM and STEAM are naturally cross-curricula and mirrors real world scenarios.

The concept of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) in education is theoretically meant to be taught in a cohesive, interdisciplinary, and authentic manner. Realistically, this is rarely the case, and "STEM disciplines are often implemented separately using contrived contexts".

The researchers of this study argue that Montessori, by design, meets the theoretical intentions of STEM while also mirroring the challenges faced locally and globally, giving students practical experience and meaningful learning. They felt that in Montessori Adolescent Environments, STEM occurs naturally and organically, because "In these spaces, interdisciplinary science, technology, engineering and mathematics learning is contextualized within the real work of running a farm" or a micro-economy.



Running a business and Occupations (hands on applications for science, geography, engineering - such as establishing Aquaponics Systems) calls for students to care for the environment itself while working collaboratively. Working together with peers and adult guides to do so gives them the necessary skills to contribute as successful adults in their communities.

Researchers surveyed guides at Montessori Adolescent Programs across the United States asking a variety of questions, including both scaled and short-response open-ended questions.

Six important themes emerged as key components of Montessori Adolescent Programs:

- Authentic & contextualized work
- Community & communities of practice
- Integrated STEM teaching & learning
- Holistic education
- Learning driven by student interests and funds of knowledge
- Socio Cultural & socio political connections

The researchers concluded that Montessori adolescents' programs' had an authentic and meaningful application of STEM. The researchers asserted that the model has much to offer students, as well as serving as a basis from which other educational settings should derive inspiration.

Montessori adolescents report higher intrinsic motivation, interest, energy and more compared with peers in traditional mainstream settings.

In this study, 290 middle school students from both Montessori and traditional schools were surveyed. Analysis of the results indicated that the Montessori students displayed greater:

- Affect
- Potency (feeling energetic)
- Intrinsic motivation
- Flow experience
- Undivided attention (a combination of high intrinsic motivation and importance)

Researchers noted that many studies have revealed the struggles most Adolescents face during this period in their lives, and the unfortunate fact that most



Adolescent Educational Programs are not designed to meet the specific needs of the students they are meant to serve. They note that while Montessori education is typically associated with early childhood, they believe there is important information to be learned about the model's approach for older children.

When considering the ideas set forth by numerous researchers regarding Adolescents' needs for their educational settings, Montessori provides solutions to current problems in mainstream education. **Young people need experiential learning, opportunities for metacognition, increased autonomy, and a model that honours their drive to work with peers.**

Typical Middle School Environments enact strict and rigid policies; Montessori does not. Teens in Montessori Environments are given structure and guidance, but also a good amount of freedom and choice. Through this freedom, students can develop self control, autonomy and internal motivation. Students did the 'right thing' as they were given the chance to develop a strong moral compass - not merely because they feared punishment or adult control.

The Montessori schools that were chosen for this study had the following characteristics in common:

- each had a built-in philosophy of intrinsic motivation
- rather than block periods they allowed for extended periods for self-directed work,
- students took a prominent role in daily decision-making
- small-group work was encouraged over whole-class lectures.

Clearly, the researchers had discovered what we in the Montessori community have long observed. A Montessori education prepares the Adolescent, not just for a career, but for life as an active and empowered citizen of the world.

Reference: Orlando Montessori Bilingual Academy. (2020, Dec 7.) Montessori and Adolescents: What do the Researchers Say? Retrieved from <https://www.orlandomontessori.com/montessori-and-adolescence-what-does-the-research-say>

CAROL DWEK'S GROWTH MINDSET AND MONTESSORI

by Darine Groch (Learning Support)

Carol Dwek, a developmental psychologist at Stanford coined the terms “growth mindset” vs. “fixed mindset” to describe that students’ mindsets—how they perceive their abilities—played a key role in their motivation and achievement.

She found that by changing students’ mindsets, we could boost their achievement ie. students who believed their intelligence could be developed (a growth mindset) outperformed those who believed their intelligence was fixed (a fixed mindset). And when students learned through a structured program that they could “grow their brains” and increase their intellectual abilities, they did better. Finally, she found that having children focus on the process that leads to learning, like hard work or trying new strategies, could foster a growth mindset and its benefits.

A growth mindset isn’t just about effort. A common misconception is equating the growth mindset with effort. Effort is key for students’ achievement, but it’s not the only thing. Students need to try new strategies and seek input from others when they’re stuck. They need a repertoire of approaches—not just sheer effort—to learn and improve.

Effort is a means to an end to the goal of learning and improving. It’s good that students try, but it’s not good that they’re not learning. The growth-mindset approach helps children feel good in the short and long terms, by helping them thrive on challenges and setbacks on their way to learning. When they’re stuck, we can appreciate their work so far, but add: “Let’s talk about what you’ve tried, and what you can try next.”

The growth mindset was intended to help close achievement gaps, not hide them.

In a Montessori environment, it is the norm for adults to acknowledge accomplishments and encourage

Carol Dweck's theory of the fixed and growth mindset



Source: Mindset: 'The New Psychology of Success', Carol Dweck (Ballantine, 2006)
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efforts rather than praise or offer rewards. The idea is for children to learn how to take pride in their own accomplishments, rather than only put in effort for adult praise or external rewards. Rewards take away a child's intrinsic motivation, or desire to work on something just because it feels good to do so. In contrast, acknowledgment allows a child to assess their own work, and feel satisfied or proud for themselves. Additionally, acknowledgments or encouragements are specific to the activity or effort at hand, rather than vague. The specificity, eg. "You are working really hard on putting on your shoes by yourself!" is more meaningful to children.

Our brains are like a muscle. We need to work and struggle to get stronger/smarter, to build new neural pathways. This is also true of developing a growth mindset. We need to practise transforming our thoughts and our words from "I can't" to "Not yet."

Growth mindset is hard but practice makes progress.

"In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, oh, I'm going to say to reveal my weakness, you say, wow, here's a chance to grow."

- Carol Dweck

NMUN: NORTHSIDE MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2022

by Janene Johnson (Deputy Principal)

Northside Montessori has been involved in the Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) for a number of years. Historically we have alternated between attending the and Rome and New York conferences each year. We are proud to be involved with such a powerful program and decided that whilst we may not be able to attend a conference on the other side of the world with thousands of other international Montessori students, it would be of great benefit to hold our own conference for Northside students. This year we had 28 current 9-12 students, 1 of our own Adolescent program students and 5 alumni attend the conference.

Dr Montessori focused her philosophy on world peace and believed that hope for a peaceful world lay in the education of children. In 1926 she addressed the League of Nations in Geneva and talked about "Peace and Education" and she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1949, 1950 and 1951. Her support of the League of Nations continued with its successor, the United Nations, as she recognised that this was a forum where world peace might be created.

Dr Montessori's involvement with the UN continues through the MMUN Program which provides a forum for students aged between 9 and 15 years to examine global issues and come up with solutions for these issues. They learn about the work by the different committees of the UN and the many matters that they deal with. It gives them the chance to put this knowledge into practice, working on real-life tasks toward meaningful goals. They learn important skills such as negotiation and consensus and that listening can be just as powerful as speaking. It lets these young people use their voice and makes them realise that they can do so.

This year we chose to focus on two issues that are managed by the UN Second Committee -Economic and Financial - Desertification and Drought and the Fourth Committee - Special Political and Decolonisation - Assistance in Landmines. Students became the delegates for their allocated country and had to research related facts and statistics, UN resolutions, their country's current governmental position and perspective and provide creative solutions to improve or address the problem and



write them in a position paper. Normally the papers would be submitted to the UN to be read by the actual UN country delegates.

At the Conference at the Crowne Plaza in Terrigal, delegates presented a speech based on the solutions that they had devised in their position papers. Firstly, they addressed Assistance in Landmines and then they addressed Desertification and Drought. They had to all work together to develop draft resolutions. This involved lots of discussion, consultation and negotiation. At the closing ceremony on Sunday, they had come to consensus on two draft resolutions which became resolutions. (See Appendix 1 and 2).

One of our alumni, Siena Farquhar, now in Year 12, began her MMUN journey when she was 11 years old. She was one of two Northside students to attend the conference in New York that year. She has participated in five conferences since then, as well as the Youth Impact Forums in New York. Siena was our Chair for the proceedings last year and her poise, confidence and the calm manner in which she managed the proceedings was amazing. She acted as Chair again this year and once again led a very professional conference,

guiding the delegates through this quite complex process.

The Closing Ceremony was on Sunday morning and it was with great pride and satisfaction that the draft resolutions became resolutions.

We would like to thank the Northside Montessori Board members and the parents for their continued support of this program. It is a life changing experience for everyone involved and we are very grateful that we can provide our students with this wonderful opportunity. We will run this program in Terrigal again in 2023 and we aim to attend the Rome Conference in 2024. We look forward to more adventures next year and if you are interested in the program for your 9-12 child, please contact us.







NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

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