



Week 7 - Term 4

20 November 2013

Distributed weekly on Wednesday

DIARY DATES

Term 4:

22nd Friday – Official Opening – State and Federal Parliament representatives in attendance

December

2nd Monday – Reports due to Admin
12th Thursday – P&F Pancake breakfast 7.30 – 8.45am
13th Friday – Reports distributed
17th Tues - Graduation Concert, Memorial Hall 4-6pm
18th Wed - Last day for students 3.15pm finish
19th & 20th Thursday & Friday – Pupil free days

2014

January 30 – First day for students

From Dianne Davis

Montessori Educational Consultant

First of all, an introduction to myself. I am a Montessori trainer, lecturer and mentor, having worked Montessori schools as a classroom teacher and as a Principal for over 13 years. I work in schools cross Australia, providing professional development, working with principals and working with staff to improve their professional practice.

I have had the pleasure of working with your staff over 3 days of last week and could not help but put 'pen to paper' to congratulate you all on the very authentic Montessori program I saw in operation throughout my time at the school. I have provided almost identical feedback to your Board of

Management but thought I would write a snippet for your newsletter as I was so impressed.

I had previously observed and provided feedback to staff at the old premises several years ago, and the transformation of the school from what it was then, to what it has since become, is remarkable. It has become a professionally run, well organised and committed entity of which all parents involved in the school's evolution should feel justly proud.

I not only observed in classes, but also met with Heather to discuss planning, future direction, organisational strategic direction and staff arrangements. You are fortunate to have someone of Heather's calibre setting the direction for the school. I have worked in many Montessori schools in my capacity of Montessori consultant and have been in few that have been led by someone with such dedication, drive and clarity of direction.

Having worked in the role of principal myself for so long, I know what energy and commitment it takes to ensure all legislative requirements are met, and what a rigorous regime of documentation is required from Government departments such as the VRQA. I have been very impressed with the level of detail in policy documents and in the flow that exists between one document and the next.

The staff team are a delight to work with. They are keen to learn, have a fantastic work ethic and obviously work collaboratively in planning for the future education of your children. Heather sets high standards and they, in turn, set high standards for themselves. They all have a clarity of direction and expectation – sound leadership is obvious at every turn.

I commend Heather, staff and yourselves in turning the school around to become the solid organisation that it is today.

Dianne Davis

Montessori Educational Consultant

From the Principal

Last night was the annual piano recital – this is organised by Peter Benson who offers piano tuition privately to children enrolled at the school. It was a wonderful night – lots of joy, respect and encouragement was evident. Again I felt immense gratitude that I am a parent at the school in addition to my work role. Thank you Peter for offering richness to our program and to the staff who work collaboratively to enable the students to receive piano tuition during school hours.

It is our hope that for children enrolled in Cycle 1 that we will be able to advise enrolment allocations for 2014 soon. For children enrolled in the funded kindergarten program, parents should anticipate attendance 5 mornings a week. Unfunded children (ie. Children not 4yrs of age by April 20, 2014) will be allocated sessions by the Directors and Enrolment Officer. Prep children will attend for full days Mon – Fri with a Wednesday rest day in Term 1, as per the usual practice in most schools.

We are still in the process of staff appointments for 2014. As these are finalised we will communicate these to the community. I would like to publically acknowledge and inform our community of the early finish of our Italian and Physical Education teacher Catherine Watt. Catherine is moving back to Melbourne and next week will be her last week with the students. Thank you Catherine for your work within the school – you've worked collaboratively with staff to create programs that have enabled the students to grow in the area of physical education and Italian. We all wish you the very best for the future and hope to see you when you visit Beechworth.

We are fast counting down to the end of the school year a reminder that our Graduation Ceremony and Concert is on Tuesday 17 December from 4-6pm at the Memorial Hall. I hope you can attend.

Kind regards, Heather

Official Opening – Friday November 22 – 11am commencement

We have been advised that Senator Ryan has been called to parliamentary hearing and is unable to attend the opening as planned. Victorian Senator Bridget McKenzie will attend on his behalf. Minister Wendy Lovell and Bill Tilley will be the other Government representatives in attendance. In addition to the ribbon cutting and tree planting and speeches, there will be a presentation of a World Peace Flame to the school.

The event will be a somewhat low key, but significant milestone for the school. As we are restricted for space, parents and interested others, please be prepared to stand on the walkways and stairs for viewing. Seating will be provided for the invited guests and students. You may need to bring hats/umbrellas etc for weather protection.

All attendees are invited to stay for a cake and cuppa after the formalities have concluded at 11.30

Lost during Relocation

Help! Since the move we cannot locate the pull up banner used for advertising the school. It's contained in a black bag, is of average size and weight but non-descript otherwise. If you can recall seeing this in the move, or might have a lead to where it is could you please let the office know.

General News

Congratulations to Helen Sellar and Quentin Pfahlert and big brother Reuben on the speedy birth of George who arrived at home, delivered by dad.

Early Years Survey

Parents of children in the kindergarten program would have received an email inviting them to complete a survey on our service delivery. If you haven't received this email or would like more information, please contact Heather. Your responses will guide our quality improvement plan. It would be appreciated if you could complete the survey to assist us in our review of our service for quality improvement.



Turquoise Cake Stall

A big thankyou to all the Turquoise families for so generously donating time, goods or cash in support of our new carpet fundraiser. Many patrons commented on our beautiful presentation of goods which was pleasing. I felt it was important for the children to work towards achieving this for our room and they certainly put in effort and care in preparing the 'goodies' for the stall.

Karen and Donna

Guitar Lessons

We are seeking an indication from parents who would be interested in their child/ren having guitar lessons at school. This would be organised directly with the teacher, and paid directly to them – we would provide the space and time. If you could please let Heather know asap. This would commence in 2014.



Moonstone Cooking Program – Orders for Lunch on Friday

As part of the Moonstone cooking program students may order a bbq style lunch for Friday. Cost is \$3.

Cycle 1 children may like to order but a parent will be required to escort the child to the courtyard at 12 noon to collect the food.

Orders must be placed by Thursday 12noon – no late orders accepted due to catering requirements. No IOUs.

Commedia Dell' Arte

Last Thursday Cycle 2&3 students enjoyed a wonderful performance of Pantalone's Inn, a Commedia Dell' Arte show presented by Make a Scene Theatre and Arts Education. For the whole hours there was non stop laughter and the students loved the audience participation. This 400 year old Italian art form was greatly enjoyed by all and will hopefully enhance the students appreciation of Italian culture and performance.



Feedback from the performers was that they were amazed by the way our children naturally responded, therefore creating a whole new element to the show and loved the close proximity with the students – they are used to performing in far more impersonal situations which a stage creates.



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P&F News

Christmas Hampers

An order form was placed in all parent pockets last week. Additional forms are available from the office. Orders to be placed by Friday November 29th.



Pancake Breakfast

Calling for volunteers to assist the organisation and operation of the Montessori P&F community breakfast on Thursday 12th from 7.30 – 8.45am. Email pandf@beechworthmontessori.vic.edu.au or let the office know of your willingness. More details re. the brekkie will be distributed to the community closer to the date. After the success of earlier egg and bacon roll brekkie we are keen to celebrate what's been a milestone in the history of the school.

Tiny Tots and Transition News

Hello everyone to our mid-term newsletter!

We all have settled in really well into our new room and are enjoying our outdoor space - especially our transition children like to go round and round the path with the trikes!

Thanks again so much for everyone involved in setting up our outdoor space, especially the Ryan family for doing all this garden work and looking after the fern plants!

Thank you to Mel and Arlen for keeping our birds supplied with fresh green in their cage, which makes it a much more natural environment for Emily and Elliott; they are certainly enjoying the seeds.

We would also like to invite all our Tiny Tots parents to do some weeding in the garden beds, when your children are playing outside; it would be much appreciated.

You may have noticed we had delivered top soil to our second outdoor area, and grass seeds have been sown by Sean. We started on a layout for this space and you can have a look at it on the board in our Ruby Room - any ideas or further suggestions are always welcome, too.

A big thank you to all the parents who have joined us on our transition mornings for the parent roster, Pip, Rachel, Ian, Sean, Amy, Emily, Gina, Georgia, and everyone else who we might have missed.

Welcome to Mutethya and Amelie and their families, it's been a pleasure to welcome you to our transition program.

Remember everyone to bring your hats, children as well as parents please.

Before we go, we would like to mention the idea of a clothes exchange where parents can pass on their children's clothes as well as choose from other preloved clothing for their children.

If anyone would like to coordinate this, please come and speak to Michaela or Mel.

Bye for now, Michaela and Mel

Cycle 1 News

Across Both Rooms

This newsletter continues the series of articles on the Montessori 3-6 years (cycle 1) curriculum. This material is available for further reading in the National Montessori Curriculum folder which is available in the school foyer.

Development and Education of the Senses (Sensorial)

Young children use their senses to explore their environment. Through sensory exploration they receive a myriad of sensory impressions from birth. From about the age of three, the developing human mind, together with the sensitive period of order, naturally strives to discriminate similarities and differences resulting in young children sorting, arranging and classifying the many sensory experiences they have collected so far. The inventory of sensory experience they construct at this age becomes a resource they use both for thinking and creating.

The Montessori materials children use to fine-tune sensory perception and discrimination, the *sensorial* materials, are some of the most distinctive and iconic of all the Montessori materials. The *sensorial* materials are sets of definitive or graded objects designed to precise specifications. Each set isolates one sensory quality only in regular and measurable ways. The qualities isolated by the Montessori *sensorial* materials include: texture, colour, shape, dimension, mass, taste, smell, temperature, pitch and intensity of sound. Children are taught a precise vocabulary to talk about the sensory qualities, and their variations, embodied in the materials. They learn these words in contrasting sets, for example, *red/blue/yellow; loud/soft; long/short; rough/smooth; triangle/square/circle; cube/sphere*.

In addition, children are introduced to the superlative and comparative language for example *longer/shorter, longest/shortest*. This vocabulary then becomes a resource children can use to make more precise meanings about their world. Children use the sensorial materials in the *exercises of the senses*.

The *exercises of the senses* provide children with keys to exploring the world, as well as a means to refine perception and to construct a foundation for abstract thinking and creative expression. Initially, the exercises provide children with opportunities to use each sense to distinguish contrasting perceptions. Later, the children use the exercises to discriminate between increasingly fine variations in order to grade the objects in each set.

The Montessori exercises of the *senses* support and develop skills and dispositions such as exploration, observation, order, questioning and speculation. These exercises prepare for learning in school subject areas, including mathematics, language, science and geography.

Content	Knowledge, skills and understanding	Activities and resources
Visual discrimination: mixed	Apply knowledge, skills and understandings of dimension, colour and shape, as well as relations between them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - art and design work - <i>knobless cylinders</i> - superimposed figures/graded geometric figures - objects in the environment
Tactile discrimination: texture	Experience, match and grade variations in texture Prepare indirectly for handwriting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>touch boards</i> - <i>touch tablets</i> - <i>fabric boxes</i>
Tactile discrimination: mass (baric sense)	Experience, match and grade variation in mass Prepare indirectly for measuring mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hefting and weighing activities - using scales - the <i>baric tablets</i>
Tactile discrimination: temperature (thermic sense)	Experience, match and grade variation in temperature Prepare indirectly for measuring temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>thermic bottles</i> - <i>thermic tablets</i>
Tactile discrimination: stereognostic	Use perception of tactile qualities to identify three-dimensional objects Prepare indirectly for the study of solid geometry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sorting activities - <i>geometric solids</i> - <i>stereognostic bags</i> - mystery bags
Auditory discrimination: dynamics/intensity of sound	Explore variation in sound and its qualities Learn to use a vocabulary to talk about variation in sound (<i>loud/soft</i> , as well as the related comparative and superlative adjectives) Prepare indirectly for the study of music, dance and poetry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listening games - playing percussion instruments - listening to different instruments - listening to different types of music - listening and moving to poetry - moving to music - singing - dancing - <i>sound boxes</i> - <i>Montessori bells</i> (accurately pitched; diatonic C major scale, plus the five sharps/flats that will turn the C major scale into a chromatic scale) - percussion instruments - live and recorded music and poetry
Auditory discrimination: pitch	Perceive, match and grade variations in pitch Distinguish and label <i>high</i> and <i>low</i> Play known tunes Compose own tunes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the <i>Montessori bells</i> - card material
Auditory	Experience and identify the timbre of	- listening games and activities (indoors)

discrimination: <i>timbre</i>	different instruments, voices and non-musical sounds	and outdoors) - musical instruments e.g. percussion instruments - music and sounds in the environment
Auditory discrimination: <i>rhythm</i>	Experience, identify and create different rhythms and beats	- playing instruments, including percussion instruments - listening to different types of music, songs and poetry - dancing - moving to music - music and sounds in the environment
Auditory discrimination: <i>style</i>	Experience and identify different styles of music	- listening to different songs and types of music from within the children's own culture and to music of different cultures
Olfactory discrimination: <i>smell</i>	Distinguish, identify and name different smells	- preparing food - arranging flowers - <i>smelling bottles</i>
Gustatory discrimination: <i>taste</i>	Identify, distinguish between and name the main tastes (<i>sweet, sour, salty, bitter</i>) Experience relations between the senses of smell and taste	- preparing and eating food - <i>tasting bottles</i> - a range of different foods