The Golden Quill

News from the School Coordinator

During the last two weeks of this term, all parents are expected to have a meeting with the teachers of their child/ren. This is an opportunity to discuss progress and to share main lesson work standards. All the teachers at the school will make themselves available for these meetings, although the part-time teachers will have more limited time slots. Can you please come to school as soon as convenient and write your name in one of the slots on the sheets in each of the classrooms. We expect that this meeting will last no longer than 20 minutes and if there are further issues to discuss, you will need to arrange another meeting early next term. I will also be available the whole time for any parents who wish to discuss more general issues.

This week is a busy time with two winter festivals (Thursday’s is for kindergarten only) and Sean Burke returning on Saturday for his second lecture on “The Education of the Will” in Class 7’s room. Festivals are usually a highlight and this one is because of the opportunity to reach a still, silent moment from which something
new can arise. For this reason, we particularly ask parents to refrain from standing in the background and chatting during proceedings. Your child/ren really notice how you feel about this sort of occasion and will mimic you in this.

Rudolf Steiner was called “an initiate of the will” and it was a particular interest of his to study how to educate children so that they have (as adults) the moral fibre to not just “go along with the herd”, but make their own direction in life when their consciences remind them. This is where Sean will be heading with his talk on Saturday, and it will touch on both kindergarten and primary school stages of development. We ask for a gold coin donation from all participants.

News from the Office

I will be away for the last two weeks of this term and I will be back for term 3. I would like to thank you all for the support and patience you have given me in my first months in the office. Lucy Morris has kindly accepted the task of covering my leave and I am sure you are in good hands. I wish you all a great end-of-term and a wonderful break.

Sandra
News from Playgroup

*Rise up oh fla-me,
By thy light glowing,
show to us, beau-ty,
wis-dom and joy.*

All Playgroup and Parent and Baby group parents are warmly invited to our special Early Childhood Winter Festival on Thursday the 20th of June, 5pm to 7pm. There will be a story, a bonfire and songs, a lantern walk and a finger food supper. Please ensure your child(ren) have had a good afternoon tea/dinner before you come along!

Our beautiful new brochure has been printed – please give a copy to all age-appropriate families that you know. We warmly welcome new faces to all three of our groups.

With thanks, Silvia, Clare and Theda

P & F Notes on the Winter Festival for the Primary School

Please keep your children with you and by your side during this Winter Festival. We would like to make the fort playground and the classroom areas out of bounds for play in the dark.

We would love to concentrate the areas of activity of the festival around the fire pit (the half-moon wall near the oval) and the hall. Could all parents please respect this and keep your children close. Thank you.

Please remember to bring:

- **greenery and flowers** to the hall on Thursday morning for the spiral walk.
- **firewood** (dry, not green) donations to the half moon wall near the oval by Friday morning.
- a **pot of soup and bread, or apple crumble** to share for dinner (and a labeled ladle please!)
- **your own** cutlery, mug/bowl per family member.

Please remember to wear **WARM clothes**, beanies, scarves, gumboots, gloves, raincoat.

We look forward to seeing you at the festival, a magical wintery delight not to be missed!

Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm,

Your P&F Committee

Markets

Next Market will be on **June 28th, from 3 to 5pm.**
Class 5/6/7 is responsible for the tea.

Information about stalls, please contact Simone on 9848 1942.
News from Karri Kindergarten

We had a great turn up for the busy bee on Saturday and completed most of the jobs on the list, including digging out and extending the water course. It looks fantastic and has created much interest among the children. Many thanks to everyone who came!

Richard (Felix's dad) ventured up the ladder to clean windows and commented on the acoustic sails' need for commercial cleaning. He has agreed to take them down at the end of the term and needs two more parents to assist. Please let us know if you can help.

A roster for parent/teacher conferences has been placed on the notice board, so if you would like to have a conversation about your child's progress at kindergarten, please put your name beside a timeslot.

We are looking forward to our winter festival on Thursday night. Please remember to give your little ones a snack before you come along at 5pm, wear warm coats, beanies and scarves and bring wet weather gear and lanterns (we are asking you to make them at home this year). Remember, you are responsible for your child(ren) on the night, so please keep them with you at all times.

Warm wishes, Denise

News from Silver Birch Kindergarten

I go with my little lantern
My lantern is going with me ......

This is an exciting week. A week to celebrate the long, dark nights and to listen to the sound of rain while snuggled in a warm and cozy bed.

I will be offering parent conferences next week. If you feel the need to talk over your child's progress or to discuss any concerns with me during this private time, please write up your name on the roster.

Remember: Lantern making time with your child in preparation for our Lantern Walk this Thursday. You and your family are also very welcome to attend the celebrations on Friday when the primary school will be walking and singing their way through the dark night ....

Kind Regards, Christine and Sophia
News from Class 1/2

In Class One and Two we are still enjoying our Fables Main Lesson. We are really living into the characters in the story by taking turns at acting them out, then drawing them beautifully into our main lesson books.

We have been busy learning our winter songs, hearing winter stories, making lanterns, and noticing what is going on around us with the change of season.

On Friday we were lucky to join the kids at Spirit of Play on a bush adventure with Joe Williams. We learnt an old technique of making fire by twisting a stick on a block of wood, heard stories told by Joe around the fire, made yummy damper, and had a wonderful time exploring the forest.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Winter Festival this Friday.

Warm wishes, Chrystal

School Sores

It has come to our attention that there have been cases of School Sores in our school community. The relevant extract from the Health Department’s Communicable Diseases Guidelines is below.

We offer the following information so that you can respond appropriately should your child become infected.
News from Class 3/4

Thank you all for making the effort to come in for our class meeting. It was a pleasure to share the space with you. I very much appreciated all your energy and time with the busy bee efforts that followed. It is so nice to be part of such a willing and able community.

Our new Main Lesson is the study of Human and Animal. On Monday we began by observing the 4 kingdoms - Mineral, Plant, Animal and Human. I was struck once again by the magic of our beautiful surrounds as we ventured outside observing the trees and horses as part of our exploration.

The children and I have been busily making our lanterns for the Winter Festival on Friday and look forward to delighting you with their glowing goodness. Please don't forget that the morning after the festival there is another talk by Sean Burke. This is open to the public and parents are especially asked to attend. 10am-12noon Saturday 22nd June - see you there.

Warm regards, Ingrid

Family Participation Scheme

At the last Council meeting, the Family Participation Scheme was approved and a copy of the outline will be sent to all families over the next week. This is a little milestone in the school’s career as it is a clear way to openly acknowledge those people who contribute so much to the school’s welfare. It is not the first time the school has adopted this idea; it is our responsibility to make sure it works well this time. If you have any improvements you would like to make to the scheme, can you please forward them to me and we will review the scheme at the end of the year.

There is one more detail to fill in and that is the “appointment” of a coordinator for this job. It is very much a coordinator role, where the actual data capture will be initially the responsibility of the parents and the final collation will be Sandra’s responsibility. So the coordinator needs to ensure there are jobs to be done, that the people responsible for particular tasks understand what they need to do and introduce new families to the scheme. Please see Sandra or myself if you are interested. Robert Gillman

Reminder

Parent Education Seminar by Sean Burke
The Importance of Curriculum Choices: Education of the Will
This Saturday 22nd June
10–12 pm Class 7 room

Child minder

Sonja Poelchow - Phone: 0408 122 515
Class 5 thoroughly enjoyed last Tuesday's field trip to the Brig Amity/Museum/Old Farm - what perfect weather we had.

Class 5 Geography projects are now in and I have been really impressed by the quality of work that has gone into them—I can see that none of them have been rushed at the last minute or half-heartedly whipped up the night before it was due!

Well done to all Class 5s. I have been enjoying all the beautiful artwork on the projects, but also been learning a few things. For example, did you know that:

- During World War II, about 15 planes crashed around Broome? You can still see the remains of some today... (Tia)
- That Ningaloo Reef is home to at least 550 species of fish and 250 different types of coral? (Katherine)
- Some aboriginal rock art in Kakadu could be up to 20 000 years old? (Toby)
- Coober Pedy provides 80% of the world's opals?
- You can see the Great Barrier Reef from the moon? (Molly)
- Archaeologists think that Karijini may have been the first land in the world that surfaced above the sea? (Merlijn)
- Port Lincoln is considered the seafood capital of Australia? (Asher)
- James Price Point is only 52km north of Broome? (Iyke)
- 'Monkey' was the name of a boat that came to Monkey Mia in the 19th century? (Caer)
- Two islands in the Rowley Shoals are not technically land, but are in fact made up of living coral? (Luka)
- At 292 metres high, Castle Hill in Townsville is just 8 metres short of being a mountain? (Izabela)
- Lilydale in Victoria has a bike track that was once a railway track - just like Denmark! (Olive)
- Lightning Ridge in New South Wales is famous for black opal mining? (Jack)

Well done to all class 5s for completing their projects on time and to such a high quality.

Parent Teacher conferences will be held over the last fortnight of term and a timetable with available times will be put up outside the Class 5 room this week - please pencil your name in when you have a chance.

Regards, Eliza
Social Development in the Very Young Child

By SUSAN WEBER
Director, Sophia's Hearth Family Center

Few areas of children’s development bring us more questions than their social and emotional development. Perhaps it is because we know that this is an extremely complex area of human development, fraught with sensitivity; perhaps we are also aware of its central place in life’s journey. We carry our social selves into every situation of life, and as contemporary psychologist and researcher Daniel Goleman has confirmed, our social capacities far outweigh our cognitive ones in determining success and satisfaction in our lives. It is also the area in which we have so much to contribute to the future of humanity; in addressing the world’s most complex problems. This is the realm in which our soul forces – thinking, feeling, and willing – intersect, and require balance and inner development to manifest their potential.

But where do these capacities begin? It is a long journey from infancy to a maturity of our social capacities that enables us to wear a garment that aligns our social capacities with our spiritual hopes and intentions – that enables us to walk through daily life meeting the world out of our best selves.

As both parents and teachers, we are surrounded by societal expectations around the social capacities of our children. How do we prepare the children for the world in which they live, giving them age appropriate guidance that meets their needs?

How do we develop the virtues of generosity and compassion that make us fully human? How do we meet conflict healthily in our both conflict ridden and conflict averse world?

From several perspectives, we may recognize that these are processes that only unfold over time. The expectations we hold, the approach we bring to children in the early years is highly dependent upon their stage of development. Appropriate expectations for a two year old will differ greatly from those for a four year old, and from those for ourselves as adults. As we become increasingly aware of the children’s subtle developmental stages and develop our capacity for observation, we can support them more successfully.

In guiding children into social life in the early childhood years, there are three aspects out of which we build a secure and rhythmic environment for them.

The first is imitation, the underlying and guiding principle of young children’s learning. Imitation stands first and foremost as the means by which children learn the virtues that will support them for their entire lives: reverence and gratitude. Our hope and task is to bring them, through our own example of reverence and gratitude, a feeling in their wills that will enable them to live with these two virtues throughout their lives in an active way. By respecting this area of the child’s spiritual freedom we offer a gift for his entire life.

Rudolf Steiner describes this phenomenon in the following way:

*And yet gratitude is a virtue that, in order to play a proper role in the human soul, must grow with the child. Gratitude is something that must already flow into the human being when the growth
forces—working in the child in an inward direction—are liveliest, when they are at the peak of their shaping and molding activities. Gratitude is something that has to be developed out of the bodily-religious relationship I described as the dominant feature in the child from birth until the change of teeth. At the same time, however, gratitude spontaneously during this first period of life, as long as the child is treated properly. All that flows, with devotion and love, from a child’s inner being toward whatever comes from the periphery through the parents or other educators—will be permeated with a natural mood of gratitude. We only have to act in ways that are worthy of a child’s gratitude and it will flow toward us, especially in the first period of life. This gratitude then develops further by flowing into the forces of growth that make the limbs grow, and that alter even the chemical composition of the blood and other bodily fluids. This gratitude lives in the physical body and must dwell in it, since otherwise it would not be anchored deeply.*

I am quoting at length, because of the mis-perception that gratitude may be equated with social habit or manners. While we do, in fact, work in the realm of social habit, this is not the realm of the virtues of gratitude and reverence in which the child’s spiritual freedom must be allowed to be active, as Steiner so clearly describes in the passage above.

The capacity for compassion, for entering into the suffering of another human being with true empathy, is a highly evolved one and a capacity that Rudolf Steiner shares will only be fully developed in the far distant future. For the young child, it is only the tenderest beginning that shows itself for his own self is just finding a home as he begins to refer to himself as ‘I’, as he begins to be a distinctive individual with his own biography and life story. Surely it is first that we learn to know ourselves before we can see the other through the eyes of compassion. We may see in even babies a hint of empathy when the other child cries, or expresses feelings through facial expression. But whether these are learned capacities or innate gifts is difficult to know.

Further and of importance in developing appropriate expectations of young children, is to consider whether this a capacity that the outside world can call upon or is whether this is a tiny spark of an essentially nascent capacity that will be available to the child only later in life, one that we do not wish to draw upon prematurely in a conscious teaching or expectation. An example of this might be the request to the child to express that he is sorry for something that he did that may have caused discomfort to another. In the child under perhaps age five – and in some children only later – there may not even be awareness that, in fact, discomfort was caused by his activity. Awareness of cause and effect are not early capacities!

What we can do as adults is to model the response that we would hope the child can later offer out of himself. We can strive to be a living example of compassion again and again, offering the healing gesture that the child cannot yet offer out of himself. The foundation for our work with children in the first seven years wants to stand firmly grounded in this understanding. We cannot teach these virtues, nor can we train gratitude through the social habits of manners. Good manners are culturally determined and vary greatly throughout the world – think of the difference among cultures in eating habits where in some cultures it is expected that one eats with ones fingers, while in other places this would be the greatest breech of etiquette.

These culturally determined habits stand in contrast to virtues that are spiritually and universally rooted. The culturally determined social capacities flow through the path of imitation of the adults in the child’s life, and later, we hope that the child will have developed the sensitivity to recognize when he is in an environment in which these need to be modified or changed altogether. The virtues of reverence, gratitude, and compassion remain forever universal.
In addition to the these central human virtues – the path of reverence and gratitude – we are entering into a second area in which we work as early childhood teachers to develop the healthy social capacities in the very young child. This is the area in which we support the development of the child’s self initiated compliance. This is the area in which we strive to offer the child opportunities within daily life in which he comes gradually toward socially mature behavior out of his own initiative, learning through the exercise of habit, through the activity within his choice, to respond to the guidance and example around him. Social manners fall into this area, as does the early learning to respond to behavioral expectations – dressing oneself, washing ones hands, returning from outdoor play when the transition time comes. There are innumerable such moments throughout the day which we make use of in strengthening the child’s will to flow through time and space as part of a social group. Working sensitively in this area strengthens resilience and flexibility, the capacity to cope with frustration, and to meet the limitations of the world in which the child lives. These strengths are supported and are developed through the clarity of the adult’s thought and will: developing healthy rhythms that take into consideration the developmental stages of the child or children, the physical environment, and utilizing the foundational principles of rhythm and repetition.

Conflict

A further area of social experience for the very young child is that of conflict. Eva Kallo, psychologist and pedagogical support staff member of the Pikler Institute in Budapest, describes conflict as a natural coinciding of interests and therefore an inevitability in life. But without skills in meeting conflict, it easily becomes a source of discomfort or avoidance. How can we prepare our children to later meet conflict with age-appropriate skills, with a recognition that conflict is a potential source of creativity?

Living and working with toddlers puts us on the forefront of this question, for as they begin to feel themselves as individuals, literally meeting the world with the creative tension of self discovery, conflict is a necessary effect as each child strives to understand what happens as she reaches out to encounter the world with the force of her being. How we respond gives the child a picture of his effect on the world around her and begins to mold his actions in a positive way.

We also encounter as adults with very young children the area in which the adult leads and guides the children’s behavior with firmness and clarity, setting clear, objective boundaries around unacceptable social behavior. This may well be defined through three principles that the teacher or parent both models and enforces through word and deed when necessary, without hesitation or apology, that:

• The child may not hurt another person (child or adult)
• The child may not hurt, damage, or destroy the physical environment
• The child may not harm themselves

The more clearly and unapologetically these principles are brought to the child and lived around her, the more easily the child can imitate and build healthy habits for life. The child is then increasingly free in her social life and interactions with the world around her, because these habits create a framework for play, for friendship, for work.

It is highly helpful to recognize that there are differentiated and mutually supportive areas in which the child grows into becoming a social being who lives in freedom, with grace, and in comfortable relationship with the other human beings around him. She will have a joy in daily life that grows with increasing practice of these capacities and in the experience of the empathy of adults around, as she tenderly unfolds the beginnings of social capacities.

*Steiner, Rudolf, The Child’s Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education, Lecture 6, p. 125
Susan Weber is the Director of Sophia’s Hearth Family Center. She brings many years as a Waldorf early childhood teacher, public school teacher and administrator, Waldorf early childhood training coordinator at Antioch University New England, and adult educator. Originally published in the webzine “Waldorf Today”
Kid Zone School Holiday Program
Join in a variety of sporting activities as well as participate in wall climbing and make a splash down the water slide!!

Climb & Slide on the Indoor Rock Climbing/ Water Slide:
Tuesday 9th & 16th of July 9:00 - 11:00
Rippaball basketball played on Ripsticks:
Wednesday the 17th of July 9:00 -12:00.
Creative Kids: Art & craft mixed with creative play:
Friday the 12th and 19th July 9:00 - 11:00
Cost: $20 per session
Cafe open for Lunch. Qualified and friendly staff. Enrolment forms available at the Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre. Further Information please contact Scott Mahar, Program Supervisor