

TERM 1, Week 4, 24th February 2009

O Mother, you are Light
And your Light is everywhere.
Streaming from your body
Are rays in thousands -
Two thousand, a hundred thousand,
Tens of millions, a hundred million -
There is no counting their numbers.
It is by you and through you
That all things
Moving and motionless
Shine.
It is by your Light
O Mother, that all things
Come to be.

The Bhairava Yamala

(This Hindu prayer celebrates the divine Mother's awesome power, which radiates throughout the manifest world. The Light of the Divine Mother represents not only physical light as we perceive it, but also the energy that enlightens consciousness and vitalizes all living things.)

Diary Dates

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Every Monday: Class 3/4 swimming lessons.
Every Tuesday: Class 1/2 swimming lessons.
Every Thursday: Class 5/6 swimming lessons.

Wed 25th Feb: Parent Group Meeting 9:30am at school.

Thu 26th Feb: Choir practice with Hetty from 4:00-5:30pm at school.

Thu 26th Feb: Class 3/4 parent teacher meeting at 7pm.

Mon 2nd Mar: Board meeting at 5pm at school. All welcome.

Thu 5th Mar: Kindy parent teacher meeting 3:30pm. Parent helper needed to look after children during the meeting, please let us know if you can help.

Fri 6th Mar: Community Dinner around the pizza oven! More details to come closer to the date.

It has been very wet over the last couple of weeks and yet the children and all the teachers are managing well. We are having outdoor play times at morning tea and lunchtime whenever it is not wet.

Kindergarten and all the primary classes have parent teacher meetings in terms I and III.

The primary classes have report writing in terms II and IV, with the kindy providing an end of year report to parents. The class 1,2 and class 5,6 parent evenings were well attended.

We have welcomed three new families to the school in the last week.

Like the lushness of our summer growth, the school and its community are growing! The direct relationship to this growth of course is our funding. The increase in school numbers means that we can once again offer specialist teachers in the primary school, for music, languages and workshop/technical support, beginning in term two.

There is also the possibility of private violin tuition during school hours. Contact the office for more information regarding these lessons.

In last week's assembly Peter told a story about a young Maori boy named Rata who made his own canoe to go on a quest, in search of his father. This week's story was about a bird that gave up its long elegant feathers and small claws and its ability to fly to live in the darkness of the forest floor.

We have been singing our summer songs and last week classes had a pleasant afternoon of singing with Katrina (Sahara on her lap)!

Blossom has settled in well as the class 1, 2 assistant and is taking early morning Bothmer gym classes for the teachers when our eurythmy teacher is overseas.

College of Teachers

Greetings,

We celebrate the last week of summer, as the crisp tones of autumn are just around the corner.

The children are engaging beautifully with all aspects of the daily, and weekly program; growing in their confidence as they learn the songs, rhymes and gestures to our seasonal songs.

Last week we had a simple puppet show of "The 3 Billy Goats Gruff". For the goats I used shells, and the troll was a lumpy, bumpy banksia pod. The children loved it and were enthralled each day as it was retold. Using simple, natural props is wonderful in the cultivation of a rich imagination in young children. I told the same story every day and it still 'held' them. The children are allowed to play with the set up show, and most often make up their own version with delightful results.

This week we farewell Sonja, who has been assisting us in Kindy on Wednesdays. We thank Sonja for all the love, commitment and grace she has brought in her time with us and hope to still have her presence in the kindy family.

We welcome Katherine Barwick to kindy, as our new assistant on Thursdays and Fridays. She will also step into the relief teaching position when required. Katherine is a qualified teacher with Steiner early childhood training, and recently taught and assisted at Milkwood Steiner School in Darwin. Katherine will be at next week's meeting and is looking forward to meeting our gorgeous children and families.

A big thankyou to Chrissie for taking on the kindy washing!

At next week's meeting we will be doing a morning circle together and talking about why we include these activities in our daily curriculum and how they relate to and support child development. The meetings are a good opportunity to meet new families and raise any questions you have. We still need a parent or two to volunteer to be downstairs with the children that are here. It is too difficult to conduct a meeting inside with the children at play. Please let me know if you can help.

Next term I will be conducting individual interviews with each family. Please remember if you need to speak to me, you can leave a message at the office. I am very happy to return any calls. Birthday blessings to Shaylah.

Love Simone

On Thursday night we held the class 1/2 parent-teacher meeting. I am happy with a 64% attendance. For some children both parents were present, other parents rang me to apologise, showing their interest by making appointments to catch up another time. Blossom and I led the parents through the movements of the current Morning Circle and everybody was introduced with a welcoming, naming song. Afterwards we went through some principles of our rhythmic day by introducing the Morning lesson, Middle lesson and Afternoon lesson with their different contents and qualities of teaching. The first Morning lesson has been the introduction of the writing of the Capital Alphabet in class 1 and of the Lower Case Alphabet in class 2. I talked about how I used Dynamic Form drawing to prepare for this Writing lesson. This is an area I would like to show and explain in more detail due to its importance. I also emphasised the importance of storytelling in our curriculum and the 'fairy tale' and connected Nature world with its elemental beings the class 1 and 2 children are still living in. Middle lessons are filled with creative activities: storytelling leading into themes of beeswax modelling, water colour painting, German verses and songs, singing and playing the bamboo flute with Hetty. Next term Katrina has made a commitment to teach Music in our class. In the afternoons we do practical things, go on nature walks, play games and do craft. We have started to teach knitting to class 1 and continue knitting with some class 2 students and introduce crochet to class 2. Gratefully I accepted help from parents and have several helpers on the way for Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 2pm to 2:45pm.

We also talked about more practical things, like reminding parents to send along water bottles for their child on our excursion day on Tuesdays to the swimming pool, hats and shoes to have at school, the checking and treating of head lice. I'll send home forms if I can clearly see head lice on a student's head. Let's keep the crawly population down, I am not in favour having to comb and treat my hair every night. We will start home visits in term 2 only by invitation and I mentioned that we can also visit a near-by creek or special tree...as part of our local and regional Geography lesson.

Then we had time for parents to ask questions or bring up a subject. Out of this arose the wish to know the curriculum taught for the combined classes. Then it was brought up how the teacher copes with a combined class and the number of 26 children in the class and if there will be a limit of students in a healthy class. I responded that we can do this with the help of Blossom assisting for 3 days a week. This needs to be discussed further at the College and Board. I believe that social learning is an important part of Steiner education and the class shows me how willing most students are to help each other and to learn from each other. The mood of cooperation instead of competition and learning to the best of ability for each individual is very healthy. Yes, it is true that some children crave a lot of personal attention. I see it as our task to integrate these children in our social interactions. When I went to school our classes were around 40 students. I think 26 children is a healthy social group especially with help provided by an assistant and Christina's support for any child who temporarily cannot cope with a certain situation. This is more than most schools can offer. As well, the viewing of television and usage of computer games etc. was brought up by some parents as not fitting with Steiner Education. This ignited a lively discussion. I offered to provide some more information on technology, television and computer games for the child. I'll attach some articles from Michaela Gloeckler, a pediatrician and leader of the Medical Section at the Goethaneum in Dornach. I welcome this discussion very much and believe that we, as parents, will always endeavour to make the best decision for the wellbeing of our child/ren. It can be a very difficult task to uphold our values when the children demand to watch TV or to play their computer games. This is where we can support each other.

Blossom told me after the meeting that during her practical teaching in a Steiner School in NZ a class decided to trial a month without TV, computer game etc. Apparently this had a very positive affect on different levels.

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I would like to propose something like this for the parents and children of class 1 and 2. What do you think? I would like to hear your opinion (phoning me, sending in a note, discussing it at the parent's forum...).

Thank you Leanne for volunteering to be our class coordinator this year. We will set up a phone tree to reach everybody to coordinate excursions, the class camp, the set-up days and the Open Day.

Elise came into our class on Friday. I worked with her 2 years ago in class 5/6. She has put an information sheet together for parents which is attached to the newsletter.

The activities we will do together once a month are part of our Science and HSI E curriculum.

I feel very positive about the class and look forward to open and supportive relationships forming the future for the children by showing them how we can care and support each other.

Love from Marga

Ancient Persia

In the flaming fire we worship thee,
 Master of Wisdom,
 Lord of Light,
 AHURA-MAZDA,
 O Spirit speak to us
 In the glory of the Sun,
 O Lord of Life.

From the regions of the North,
 From the regions of the South,
 Forth rushed Ahriman the deadly,
 And the demons of darkness, the evil-doers;
 Thus spake Ahriman, the deadly Deceiver:
 "Kill him, destroy him, Hated Zarathustra."

Thus spoke Zarathustra:
 "The world of AHURA-MAZDA is my weapon
 With his sword will I strike
 The holy word of the Lord of Light,
 The living word of Creation."
 Forth fled Ahriman, the Deceiver,
 And the wicked evil-doing Demons
 Into the depths of outer darkness.

The classes have been absorbed in the history of Ancient Persia and Ancient Egypt. Class 4 will finish this week working on their project about an Egyptian god, something built during ancient times or a ritual. The classroom has been buzzing with excitement as we realise all the different connections of the gods and their place in the daily rituals of this magnificent civilization. Class 3 has been learning a hymn to Ancient Persia that they will speak at the assembly. The dramatic stories of the power of Ahura Mazda and Ahriman intensified with the story of the birth of Zarathustra. The children have been creating sentences as a class to describe the story. Class 3's list words for this week are fire, hire, wire, old, sold, gold, cold, bold, fold, hold and told. I suggest that the words are written out or cut off the homework sheet and placed on the fridge for daily practise. Both classes have had spelling words and practise of words taken from the stories. We are creating a class cookbook, which will be made up of recipes from the cakes

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we bake for each birthday, and other delicious foods cooked at other times. If you have a family specialty or suggestion please send it to school this term. Our swimming lessons are really wonderful. There are two teachers. One is Damon, a past Rainbow Ridge School student. Both are keen teachers and are lovely with the class. They learned to glide, use the breath, facing downwards and then use swimming arms and a side breath. We finished with different kinds of diving and diving over the noodle, which was held above the water. At the moment my daughter Yasmine comes with us to help but there is always space on the bus for a parent. Our last lesson of the term will be half an hour earlier so that we can have a picnic in the park afterwards. This Thursday is our parent evening, which will start at 7pm sharp. I look forward to seeing you there.

Love Simone

Class 5/6 News

The class is delighting in the intricacies of geometry and producing some lovely work. Instead of formal homework this week the children have been given an assignment to design and construct a 3-D geometric model, object or sculpture at home. Some parental advice and assistance may be needed. Some lovely things have been made in the past - fabric designs, stick sculptures, nail and thread designs, clay models, wire sculptures, mobiles, even garden design. The due date is Friday 6th March (next week) so the children will need plenty of encouragement.

Swimming is going very well and the children are making excellent progress with their very proficient instructor.....Mr Fish.

We begin a new main lesson next week which will take us through descriptive writing and dictation skills for class 5 and story writing for class 6.

Lots of things happening and a bit of sickness around. Good meals and early nights are needed.

Warm regards Peter

Craft Group Starting Again

Sylvia would like to have a weekly craft group for all those interested in learning to create crafty things and to help prepare for the craft stall at our school open day later in the year.

This is always a fun morning with shared lunch and children are always welcome.

Please call Sylvia to talk about what days of the week suit you best on 66897524.

Sylvia for the Craft Group

Scarlet Fever Alert

We have one confirmed case of Scarlet Fever at the school. Scarlet Fever is characterised by a rapid rise in temperature lasting only a short while, a dense reddish rash with red goose-bump-like spots lasting only a short while, painful throat, possible ear-ache. Incubation period is about 5 days.

Missing Sewing Machine

A school sewing machine has been missing for some time and just might be sitting at your house after you have helped us with some sewing in the past. If so, would you please let us know and either bring it in or we can arrange to collect it.

We are expecting to need it for class teaching, so it would be very good to have it returned soon.

Regards Cristina