

## **Director News**

As many of you would already know this newsletter will unfortunately be my last newsletter as director of Kurilpa. I have made the difficult decision to move on and pursue other possibilities. During my seven years as director I have built friendships, laughed, created, collaborated, supported and played with 51 team members, 276 families, 350 or more children, 5 presidents and over 25 management committee members as well as countless members of the community and supporters of Kurilpa. I would like to thank each and every one for being generally amazing and making my job so easy. I am especially proud of all the team at Kurilpa, their professionalism and commitment to early year's education is awe inspiring and it does not go unnoticed. Working at Kurilpa has been more than a job, it's been a passion of mine and an absolute joy. Kurilpa has become my heart and family, I will treasure the many memories I've made at Kurilpa. We have done some exciting things over the years; we achieved state early childhood service of the year, built a second story and expanded the heart (kitchen) of Kurilpa, we celebrated our 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, implemented the Early Years Learning Framework and National regulations and Law, been strong advocates in the sector for the early years, received exceeding in the National Quality Standards, produced a brand new Kurilpa Cookbook, continued to evolve and develop meaningful children's programs and relationships as well as going from strength to strength in our fundraising efforts and attendance at Kurilpa gatherings and events. Of course we have done so much more however if I started to list it all, we would be here all day. Kurilpa is a special place as you would all know and it wouldn't be what it is without the connections and relationships between our team, families, children, community and environment. We, the team, parents, children and community have created a special place for young children at Kurilpa, where we can support them in their early learning journey. I look forward to seeing Kurilpa continue to grow and I thank you for letting me be a part of it. I will be staying on until mid-January as I am very excited to see the new interior paint work and new children's bathrooms which will be happening during the end of year break.

Anyway onto lighter things like 2016! There will be a few team changes in 2016 which we are very excited about. As of 2016, ratios will be changing to bring national consistency to an important area of the National Quality Framework (NQF). Educator-to-child ratios are a key factor in delivering quality education and care, allowing educators to give more individual attention to each child. Implementing these ratios is a significant achievement for the sector and an important milestone in the drive for national consistency. The Kindergarten room will decrease to 22 per day (1:11) and toddlers ratios will increase to 15 per day as well as gaining an additional team member (1:5). Nursery will remain at 8 per day (1:4) and Jnr kindy at 16 per day (1:8). There will be slight change to the educators in some rooms however we are really excited- As of January 2016 the educators in each room will be-

- Nursery- Mel and Rachael (both Full time)
- Toddler- Cass, Flick and Cattie (all full time)
- Jnr Kindy- Sophie (4 days per week), Nikki (3 days per week), Hannah (full time)
- Kindergarten- Marion and Anthony (both full time)
- Floats- Ranjani (4 days per week) , Alex (full time) and Lisa (2 days per week)



- Catherine- Admin Assistant (working Monday, Wednesday and Thursday)
- And of course Lizzie in the Kitchen.

Sophie and Hannah will continue to take on leadership roles across the service with Sophie continuing her fantastic work as Assistant Director and Hannah as Educational Leader working to support the team in their pedagogical practice and curriculum implementation and as such will be non-contact one day per week.

We have had an outstanding year this year and I expect the same for 2016. I wish everyone a joyous break and goodbye to the families who will also be leaving Kurilpa as their children move into school next year.

Cheers Marisa

P.S Don't forget we still have plenty of Kurilpa Cookbooks available, which make fabulous Christmas presents- \$15 each or 3 for \$40!

#### **Kurilpa Dates to remember**

- *Mangos should arrive week of the 14th December*
  - *End of year Gathering Sunday 13th December*
  - *Kindergarten Disco Wednesday 16th December*
- *Kurilpa will be closed as of 5:40pm on 24th December and will re-open 7:30am 12th January*

## **President's News**

### The Kurilpa Team

Marisa is sadly leaving us in mid-January 2016 after seven years as Director. Marisa performs this many-faceted role calmly, efficiently and knowledgeably. Marisa's leadership at the centre has no doubt greatly contributed to what Kurilpa is today: an award-winning centre of excellence. We thank her for all she has done for Kurilpa, we will miss her, and we wish her well in her new job. The position of Director has now been advertised on Seek and applications close on 17 December 2015. We have big shoes to fill!

I acknowledge and thank all the Kurilpa educators for their fantastic work this year. They are passionate professionals, and I am sure all the parents and grandparents walk away from the Centre in the morning feeling incredibly grateful that their children are in their hands, and that Lizzie's wonderful food is in their bellies, as do I. Staff received a well-deserved pay rise, bringing staff wages up to 7.5% above their particular award classifications for the 2015-16 year. We farewelled Melisa, Jane and Sally this year and thank them for their brilliant contributions to Kurilpa.



### Achievements under Kurilpa's Strategic Plan 2014 -2017

The Plan seeks to support the Centre's Vision, which is "a community that nurtures, supports, challenges and celebrates with children in their life journey, and a community with strong alliances between children, families, team and the earth". Achievements to highlight include to strengthen the pathway between kindergarten and prep year by increasing Kurilpa's understanding of parental and school expectations, and achieving optimal numbers and quality in the Kindergarten. Links were increased between other community run, not-for-profit centres. Flexible professional development has been invested in for staff, which suits the learner and their learning needs. The website was completely redeveloped and modernised, thanks to Daina Adam and staff. Environmental Sustainability across the Centre was improved.

### Imminent renovation

The space between the Junior Kindy room and the toddler space is being developed and improved, and bathrooms between Junior Kindy and Kindergarten rooms are being renovated in the Christmas break.

### Management Committee

Thank you to all the MC members for their wisdom, support and time over an extremely busy year: Melalie Collie, Vice-President (Staff Liaison), Trudy Heisrath-Bishop, Vice-President (Policy), Richard Abraham (Secretary) and Alex Neels (Secretary for the first part of the year), Katy White (Fundraising Co-ordinator), Paolo Marinelli (Treasurer), as well as our ordinary members who by no means are ordinary Rakalene Condon, Jody Hart and Gayle McCaul.

We will need some new members for the committee from the time of the AGM in March 2016 as we lose current members' as their children move on to school. If you are interested, please get in touch.

### Fundraising

A whopping amount was raised this year (possibly a record haul) - thanks so much to Katy and Alison for all their work. Thank you too to the staff who give up their free time to help with fundraising events. Thanks to all families who baked, bought, flipped sausages or stood on a stall.

See you at the End of Year party on Sunday 13th December at Paradise Park.

Yasmin Gunn, President, Kurilpa Management Committee

### Fundraising News

Another fantastic year of fundraising at Kurilpa! In the first part of the year we raised valuable funds via an election day bake sale, Pushies Galore bake sales (one in our own car park), pie sales, and a cooking demo at Wandering Cooks. Since July, we have held a Massive Garage Sale at Raw Art which raised \$2500 and helped us to clear out our own garages (and perhaps add to them!). We've marvelled at our children's drawings for the Art Plates and invested in cotton Turkish towels, both parent-initiated fundraisers. A very fun night was had by all who attended the 'Thank Truck its Thursday Halloween special' at Wandering Cooks and Kurilpa raised money with a raffle on the night. We hosted another Pushies Galore event in our car park in November (this time a BBQ) and fingers crossed our annual mango drive goes ahead despite challenges up North... As a result of the great fundraising effort, we have made some really important purchases and upgrades in the Centre such as: new bathrooms in both the 0-3 end and 3-5 end.



We rely on our parents and staff members for new and exciting ideas to raise money for Kurilpa. If you have any good ideas for next year's fundraising, please just let us know as we appreciate ideas and offers of help from all Kurilpa parents and staff members.

Thanks to all who assisted this year – as always, much appreciated.

Katy White and Alison Lees

### **Kitchen News**

To all of the families and children leaving Kurilpa to begin Prep in 2016, I wish you all the best. Here are some healthy lunchbox ideas adapted from Nutrition Australia Qld (NAQ), to help ease the transition into school life.

Your lunchbox should ideally contain a combination of foods from the 5 food groups. Ideas from each group include;

Grains- multigrain and wholemeal breads, pita, bagels, fruit bread, English muffins, pikelets, scones, noodles, quinoa, corn thins, homemade pizza, rice cakes

Dairy- cheese (sliced, grated, cubed), yoghurt, smoothies, milkshakes, calcium fortified soy drinks

Meat and Alternatives- slices of roasted meats, boiled eggs, baked beans, tofu, tuna, salmon, chickpeas, canned bean mix, lentils, peanut and seed butters

Fruit- fresh sliced fruit, tinned fruit in natural juice, dried fruit (small amounts), and frozen fruit

Vegetables/Salad- cherry tomatoes, corn on the cob, cucumber, and vegie sticks with cream cheese or homemade dips, mashed avocado, lettuce cups, vegie pikelets, savoury scones or muffins, quiche

Include fresh water every day and a frozen block to keep the food safe.

The planned lunchbox days during November and December at Kurilpa will provide a good example for the children of what to expect during mealtimes at school. Good luck everybody!

As always, everybody should be limiting the foods they eat which are high in saturated fats, added sugars, and added salt.

- Aim for the lowest saturated fat content: less than 3g per 100g is best.
- With sugar, aim for 15g or less per 100g; and
- For salt, 400mg per 100g is good, but 120mg or less per 100g is best. (Reference - [eatforhealth.gov.au](http://eatforhealth.gov.au) )

I have printed fact sheets from NAQ that show the recommended dietary intakes and what a serving size looks like for each age group. If you would like a copy just see me in the kitchen.

Best wishes for a happy and safe Christmas period. Remember there is a category in the food pyramid for "sometimes" foods so indulge and enjoy a little! See you in the New Year.

Lizzie

## Kindergarten News

### **The Power of High Expectations**

As we sail quickly and smoothly (so far!) into the end of 2015 we are taking this time to pause for a moment to reflect on the shape of the year so far. Each year shares aspects of the ones that have come before, as well as the ones we're moving towards, but there is always something unique that distinguishes each one from the others.

This year it has definitely been the very social nature of the group we've worked with; these kids love to party! That has brought with it very particular rewards and challenges....but the learning that has happened as a result has brought us all together and, in the process, changed us all in very good ways.

One of the key challenges we have worked with has been to get us all working from the same place. We started the year with a new teaching team, a significant group of last year's cohort, children transitioning from junior kindy and some completely new to childcare. And strong characters all of us! We enjoyed plenty of inspiring and lively circle time conversations as we got to know each other, but we struggled too, as we all learned to make space for the wide variety of learning and communication styles that we were working with.



The breakthrough for Anthony and I as a teaching team came from a professional conversation we had about the ways available to us to show just how much our children are capable of. It was clear they already had this sense of themselves as competent, capable and creative; as



confident, motivated and involved; and as questioners, problem-posers and problem-solvers (QKLG, p.4). Our curriculum also challenges us as teachers to see ourselves the same way and asserts that effective teaching practice takes place in teaching and learning relationships that connect these two images (QKLG, p.4).

And so we looked for ways to express these high expectations of ourselves and our children in ways that accommodate all our combined strengths. The answer, as it should, came from the children themselves: "let's have a party!" they said. They have been the masterminds behind the series of events we have held at the centre, leading the way in every stage from concept to completion. This has required them (and us) to: communicate with each other; give up on personal ideas that don't fit with the group's goals; work effectively alongside a very diverse range of peers and adults;

maintain individual integrity within a successful partnership; and persevere to a negotiated conclusion. It's been awesome!



This work has got us thinking a lot about the impact on positive learning outcomes (for us all) of high expectations and the important role that teachers and families play in expressing these. Research supports the idea that there is a clear relationship between positive learning outcomes and adult expectations: those high expectations from both early childhood professionals and parents can enhance children's resilience, achievement, motivation and self-belief (Gizir & Aydin, 2009; Ahmed, Minnaert, Van Der, & Kuyper, 2008, in VEYLF, p. 5).

Our teaching and learning relationships have evolved as a result of our experience this year, in ways that will impact on the years to come. We're looking forward to many more conversations with everyone in the Kurilpa learning community about how we each embed and act on the high expectations we have for ourselves and for our children.

Thanks Marion and Anthony

#### References:

Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) (2010). Queensland kindergarten learning guideline. Brisbane, Australia: Queensland Studies Authority

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2009). Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework; For Children Birth to Eight Years. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority

## Junior Kindy News

As we enter our final months of 2015 in our wonderful Junior Kindy room, our focus remains on building kindergarten ready children who feel capable and confident in their social and emotional identities. We continue to adapt our junior kindy programme to become more aligned with the kindergarten programme. The children are able to participate in more structured and complex group times, and their ability to concentrate, engage, and understand the importance of taking turns is constantly developing. The children are bringing ideas from home, things they wish to make or experiences they wish to share. In these times children have the opportunity to listen, ask questions,

make suggestions and come together as a group to form a plan of how they wish to structure their day. What interests them? What projects they are wanting to be involved in. This time gives them the opportunity to incorporate their skills of investigating, inquiring, hypothesising, and planning as they decide on how they will go about making their project a reality. What space will they need? What resources? And what role will each child have in the project?



Through our strong connection and collaborations with the kindergarten team (friendship festival, neighbourhood garden project and samba party) and shared outdoor play time, we feel the children have already formed close relationships with the teachers and peers. ‘Children’s cognitive understanding is enriched and deepened when scaffolded by teachers, peers, family and the wider community.

The key foundation to building strong relationships is respect and this is achieved through understanding. One of the focuses for our journey this year has been embedding holistic sustainable practices in our everyday routines. This incorporates our environment, cultural competences and community projects. We’ve journeyed down and initiated a partnership with our local community garden at Lyon’s park. Here we have been visiting the gardens and their very passionate gardeners to work with them to establish, learn, and enquire about different aspects of the garden. We grew tomatoes with the gardeners and were then able to use them for our joint samba parade with the kindergarten to make an appetizing salsa to share with the gardeners. It’s amazing to see the children’s faces light up with excitement as they show off their hard work and persistence.



Over the month of December, we will be focusing on transitions across the centre; in particular we will be welcoming up the Toddler children of whom we have already been making connections with: we have been enjoying joint afternoons on the deck after rest time and Monday, Wednesday and Friday’s from 10:30am until 11:30am when they join us for our morning yarn up.

The Junior Kindy children will start their transitions up to Kindergarten in December with a very casual transition as we join the Kindergarten for afternoon tea’s and a circle time before

transitioning outdoors together.

As always, there are a few changes to our amazing team across the centre next year. Nikki and I are very excited to announce that Hannah will be joining us in the Junior Kindy room next year! We’re looking forward to Hannah joining us and sharing with us some of her expertise.

Next year, we are also very excited about some renovations that the Junior Kindy room will be undergoing. We recently received a grant from The Gambling Community Benefit fund and we are finally getting an upgrade to our outdoor deck and garden (area between our room and Toddlers). We will be replacing the stairs and removing hand rails to make way for new stairs and garden beds! We are really looking forward to being able to use the space to its full potential next year and allowing the children to have input into some of the aspects of the garden next year.

A huge thank you to all our amazing Junior Kindy children and their dedicated families and friends for another rewarding and successful year. We wouldn’t be where we are today without your



ongoing support and contributions. We wish you a very enjoyable holiday and look forward to seeing you back in 2016!

Thanks Sophie, Nikki and Rachael

## **Toddler News**

What a great year 2015 has been for our Toddlers! This year had a great focus on relationships. For a lot of our Toddlers, this year was their first real time away from family and discovering who they are as individuals in their own rights. The beginning of the year saw us focusing on building our little



people's sense of self, and their resilience to cope with new situations. We've seen our routines change and adapt to what best suited our Toddlers, their personalities and their needs. We've learned about each other and discovered what we need to make us feel like we belong and feel confident in our Kurilpa environment. A lot of that had to do with time, and time can be a big thing when you've only had two years in this great big world! We've had time for extra cuddles - because being held and comforted lets us know it's safe to feel all these great big emotions that we're only just

discovering within ourselves. We've had time for uninterrupted play - allowing our minds and bodies to grow and explore, our endless curiosity pushing our need to know *more*. We've had time to rest - because through letting our bodies slow even for a short while, we can reflect and renew our energy for the rest of our day.

Friendships and relationships have blossomed within the Toddler group, and through having a solid foundation of belonging, we've been able to see these grow. Our Toddlers have truly become caring individuals, looking out for each other and their Nursery friends when we're all joined together. Being a part of community and understanding what it is to be a part of something bigger than ourselves has also become something the Toddlers have worked on this year. We've spent lots of time with our Nursery friends, truly making our under 3's yard and 'end' a joint learning and loving adventure. We've opened our gate to our Junior Kindy neighbours, allowing us opportunities to push our learning in new directions with guidance from our older peers. We've really enjoyed the extra time building relationships with Junior Kindy, which will give us greater confidence when many of the Toddlers move on in the new year. Not to forget the Kindergarten class, we've helped out with their ongoing task of recycling paper products to create bricks to use in play and in the Orno. ]



The Toddler's gardening project has taken up most of this year with a never-ending abundance of learning opportunities available. Teamwork skills came into play with *all* Kurilpa children and teachers helping to shift rock, dirt and timber to create a new garden



bed and mud kitchen area in the Under 3's yard. We researched how to make the 'perfect soil' for worms to live in, using Kurilpa's own Worm Juice and compost from the Compost monster to do so. Seedlings were added and then came the big task of taking care of our garden. Watering, weeding, protecting it from pesky possums (and over-eager fingers!) became a daily event and it lead to an outcome none of us could have imagined. Our yield from the crops we've planted has not only fed the Toddlers on a daily basis ("can we have some kale?" is something you'll often hear in the yard) but the whole Kurilpa community as we harvest, chop, bake and create tempting treats for everyone!

Growing our own garden has lead us to explore the wider West End community, with Lyons Park again becoming a focus for our excursions. We've loved sharing our knowledge of plants and gardens with our families, especially in the community garden. We also were able to show off just how capable we are climbing over logs and mountains of bark. A sign surely, of all the great food we've helped grow and eat taking our physical skills to even greater heights. Our love of nature took our eyes skyward, exploring clouds and the bird life that surrounds Kurilpa, even encouraging us to add more native plants to our garden to entice our neighbourhood in.

As summer fast approaches, we've taken on a project on water. There are so many things to explore with this topic; colour, shape, movement, experimenting with elements, adding words to our vocabulary like volume and buoyancy and more. So far we've looked at depth and colour using buckets of water colours to put our hands in, bubbles as we mixed soap and water, creating foam. There's so much more to discover!



As we head into December, we will start preparing our Toddlers for their next big adventure: Junior Kindy. Junior Kindy has already invited us to come visit three mornings a week, where we'll be shown around the room and the routine by the now oh-so-much-more-knowledgeable Junior Kindy friends. We'll have longer visits in the lead-up to January when we'll say goodbye to most of our Toddlers as they start 2016 as the new class of Junior Kindy. This means we'll be welcoming a lot of new faces from the Nursery room into Toddlers and a new staff member, too! 2016 sees the Toddler group growing, from a class maximum of 12 children to 15 with an added team

member which is something Felicity and I are truly excited about! It'll be a brand new adventure for us all and we're really looking forward to seeing where this next venture will take us all.

Thank you all for another amazing Kurilpa year!

Cass, Felicity and the Toddlers

## Nursery News

This has been a huge and wonderful year. A big BIG thank you to the children and families who embraced the journey we have travelled together, we are so grateful to have shared this year with you all.



Over the year our program has focused on the development and routines of our children. As our room is ever evolving due to the range in age, abilities and new children starting, we work towards maintaining the core values whilst meeting individual needs.

### Collaboration

We have had a strong focus on organising the play space and routines to allow the children to work together, building crucial social skills such as turn-taking, problem-solving, sharing and communicating their needs/wants. Child theorist Vygotsky advocates the necessity of learning in groups, explaining that a child learns best when they are collaborating with a more experienced peer or adult, gaining their knowledge from others.

This has meant that over the course of the year, the children have moved from an individualistic approach to learning to engaging their peers and using the verbal and non-verbal abilities they have to communicate with others to create shared understandings. As a result we are seeing greater inter-dependence and the children are increasingly stepping in when their peers are encountering struggles and helping them overcome them or sharing exciting discoveries with each other.



### Caring for our earth

Now more than ever we are aware of the need to create “global citizens”, encouraging all people to care for their earth. For the nursery children, this is taught through modelling sustainable practices, composting our food scraps, watering our plants daily and creating our own toys from re-using boxes and cartons.

We are finding now that the children are showing initiative in sustainable practices, regularly walking over to the plants and holding up the watering cans to remind us that the plants need water and using gentle hands when handling the greenery in our yard.



### Building Confidence

We have had a wide range of transitions through the year. From new children starting at Kurilpa to children moving on to the toddler room, from children learning to walk and children learning to use the toilet. To help the children move between the large and small changes they experience every day, we work hard to help them develop a strong sense of security and trust - in themselves and in the nursery environment. This is achieved through embracing the children's needs for attachment, consistency and individuality, allowing the children to know that we support them and that their needs and wants are important to us. This sense of security enables them to whole-heartedly engage in the program without feeling uncertain or reserved.



From the very beginning of the year, we have been on a mission to transform the nursery into a space where the environment truly is the third teacher. This meant making and finding new resources with the specific focus of sustainability, sensory integration and encouraging higher-order thinking skills such as seriating, problem-solving and sorting. We have added sensory texture panels to the walls, new astro turf textured flooring (especially fun and tactile for the crawlers!), more natural materials including logs and timber disks, an indoor water play table, ball runs, a range of different timber puzzles and felted balls (great for sorting and posting).

We have noticed a real shift in energy through the year as we slowly adapted the space. The children are calmer and able to concentrate for longer periods of time as they learn and discover. They are self-selecting resources to play with, setting themselves goals and working hard to achieve them. We are so proud of how far they have all come in their ability to develop their own skills through focused play.

#### Farewell from Hannah

As of the beginning of 2016 I will be moving out of the nursery room and working as an educator in junior kindy. It is a bittersweet transition as I will sorely miss Mel, all of the beautiful nursery children and you, their wonderful families.

This year has been glorious, your children regularly bringing smiles and laughter for us all, demonstrating to us time and again that we should stop and find joy in all the little moments we share. Thank you for your kindness and resilience through the year as we all worked together - Mel and I both felt very supported by the families and we appreciate your collaboration and encouragement.

Happy New Year!! Thank you all again for an inspiring year, we can't wait to hear all of your fun holiday stories in January!!

Warm regards,

Mel and Hannah.