

NORTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL - EARLY LEARNING, PRIMARY & SECONDARY

CHRONICLE

SUMMER

OOSH NEWS:

BEFORE, AFTER SCHOOL
CARE, HOLIDAY PROGRAM

HOW TO SUPPORT THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT:

AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL



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NORTHSIDE CHRONICLE
SUMMER 2022

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL



2022 has been a wonderful year at Northside. Following from a year of disruptions and periods of lock down, we have been very blessed to be able to generally return to normal life at the school. It has been wonderful to have many of the exciting events that we have previously enjoyed being put back onto the 2022 Northside calendar. Term 4 is typically a very busy one for events and this year certainly followed this pattern.

It certainly felt like there was something on every week of the term, with some weeks featuring a number of events or activities for both students and parents. We are so grateful for our community at Northside, and the support that they show across the whole school. With Term 4 events such as Production, Grandparents day and our Year 6 Celebration we certainly get to see our vibrant community in action.

Music Events

Throughout Term 4 we were entertained and amazed by the many musical talents of our students at Northside. These talents are certainly supported by our extensive Music program which provides opportunities not just for practice but also performance. During Term 4 we had our last Soiree for the year, with students across the whole school performing at this event. It was especially pleasing to see the performances of our Year 7 students playing both Guitar and also Piano during the event.

This year we also held a end of year Music Concert which also featured the whole school from pre-primary to Year 7. It was lovely to hear performances from all these sections of our school, and share in the theme of Peace. This event was very well attended by all our parents, and it was so lovely to be able to hold this event outdoors due to the great weather on the day.



Production

After many months of rehearsal and preparation our 6-9 and 9-12 Production was held in Week 4. Both presentations were held in our Multi-Purpose Hall and it was certainly a full house. Our 6-9 brought to us a performance written by the students which featured some wonderful dances and story telling about their 'Jungle Expedition'.

Our 9-12 students from the Amaroo and Orana class presented a Northside version of 'The Wizard of Oz'. This version featured all our Year 6 students in key roles. Our students created a range of other characters to supplement the story and provide opportunities for all to be involved. The additional characters were suited to the students and very imaginative in their creation and also costumes.

The Production Night is always a wonderful time, and our 2022 production was no different.





Remembrance Day

On 11 November our school commemorated Remembrance Day. At this time our students gathered together to commemorate the day and students shared why we commemorate Remembrance Day and what the poppy and rosemary represent. It was a lovely opportunity for all our students. Following the ceremony, all the students placed a poppy that they had made on the front Office.

Kids Giving Back

This year many of our 9-12 students participated in the Kids Giving Back program which involves food preparation and cooking for the homeless. Our students travelled to Paddington where they made vegetable pasta, fruit kebabs, and rice paper rolls. The group made over 200 items which were given to Oz Harvest who will transport them to Martin Place for distribution. It was a very enjoyable experience for the students and they learnt the importance of community and giving back to those who are less fortunate. This is certainly an activity that we would look to continue in 2023.

Weave ~ Giving Tree

Another opportunity for our families to contribute to the wider community at Christmas time was the Christmas

Giving Tree event with the proceeds going to the organisation Weave. Weave is a Youth and Community Service organisation who run the Kool Kids program. The Kool Kids program works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are facing complex social issues such as poverty, family breakdown or systemic disadvantage. Throughout the last few weeks of Term, many of our school families contributed gifts to the Giving Tree and on Tuesday in our final week it was great to have a representative from Weave come and collect the gifts and also speak to our students about the Kool Kids program and where the gifts would be going. Thank you so much to all our students and families who contributed to this program.

Year 6 Celebration

On the last Friday of Term 4 it was a real delight to be able to celebrate with our Year 6 students and their families in their end of year assembly and also their celebration Dinner. We are so happy for all our Year 6 students, many of whom have been at Northside since commencing at the age of three.

We wish all our Year 6 students all the very best as they make the transition to high school, for many, continuing at Northside for our Secondary School Adolescent program.



Retiring Staff

A significant event in the life of our school was that two of our long serving staff members retired at the end of 2022. After many years of service to Northside, Edna Salvador our Kookaburra Directress, and Mary Abolins our PE teacher have decided that it is time for them to take a break and enter retirement.

Edna, the Kookaburra 3-6 class teacher, commenced at Northside in 2007 and served our community and countless number of students and families for 16 years. Being part of a school community for this period of time is certainly very valuable and demonstrates her commitment to both Montessori education and the Northside community.

Mary, who taught Physical Education to our students each week, commenced at Northside in 2004. Mary served our community for 19 years and has always sought to encourage our students to be active and enjoy sport and physical activity. Mary has made a significant contribution to the lives of many, many students during this time and has shown a great commitment to Northside.

As a community we will miss Edna and Mary. They are highly valued staff members, and their departure will be felt by many.

Garden Party

The final event for the year was our Term 4 Garden Party. This was a lovely way for our whole school community to come together and celebrate the year that we have had at Northside in 2022.

At this time of the year it is always good to reflect on the past year and all the many events and activities that have occurred. We are certainly very fortunate to have such a wonderful community at Northside and we look forward to another exciting year in 2023.

Adam Scotney
Principal





AN EXCURSION TO THE ART GALLERY

by Edna Salvador (3-6 Kookaburra Directress)

It was the perfect day for an excursion. The sun was out in all its glory and the children's excitement was very palpable you can cut it with a knife. They have been talking about this for days and now the moment was here.

In Montessori parlance, we call this excursion a "going out" and this involves the class taking their learning journey beyond the classroom walls. While the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom is captivating, it is not enough. Children must witness and experience first-hand what is out in the community. "Going out" is an attempt to connect the children with the outside world.

The children started arriving before 8:30 a.m. and on this particular day, no one was late and no one had separation issues. They came complete with schoolbags packed with sustenance for morning tea and lunch, water bottles and sun hats. Our parent chaperones also came to help the us teachers to which we are very grateful. Supervision during a "going out" activity is our utmost priority.

One might think that an excursion to an art gallery would not be a suitable activity for young children since this age group likes touching things and it's a "no touching" policy in this place but in this particular instance, all the children took in the sights and sounds with abandon. Viewing pieces of art surely widened their horizons and exposed them to think of art in a wide spectrum outside the usual proverbial box of figurative art. Art is an experience and the children certainly experienced different kinds of art with their senses- sculptures, installations, religious art, Japanese animation, two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, graphic art, etc.

What stood out was that the children were immediately attracted to moving images and graphics that had lots of colourful. The videos and animation made them sit down and view these with rapt attention. These also elicited varied reactions and comments.

The trip to the art gallery was truly a multi-sensorial experience that allowed the children to use all their senses. When asked how the trip make them feel, the answer was a resounding "It was good and we liked it!"



THE COOINDA CLASSROOM

by Linda Van Lierop (6-9 Cooinda Directress)

It has been a very busy Term 4 in Cooinda. The term started off with a bang, with the 6-9 children heading off on an excursion to the theatre to see a production of Erth's Prehistoric World at the Riverside Theatre. This show linked in to the work they have been undertaking on the history of the Earth, the Timeline of Life and the evolution of animals. It was very impressive how well behaved the children were, and the patience they displayed while waiting for other schools to be seated was wonderful.

The term continued to be busy with production practice being undertaken regularly throughout the first four weeks of term, with the children learning their dances (that they helped choreograph) and helping create their costumes. On the performance night, the children were buzzing with excitement, and did a fantastic job!

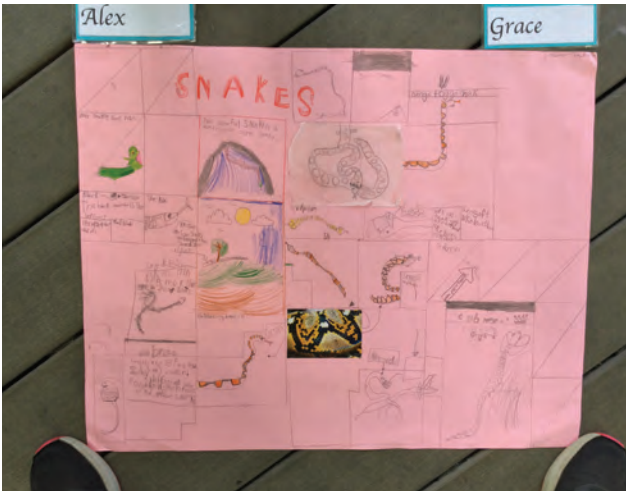
Grandparents Day was celebrated with the children welcoming their special visitors into the classroom. The happiness and excitement coming from the children highlighted what a positive experience this was for all. After the special visitors departed, the children were introduced to paper lantern making to assist them in

calming down and settling back into the day. Pin maps and puzzle maps have been undertaken with gusto by many of the Cooinda children, as has weaving.

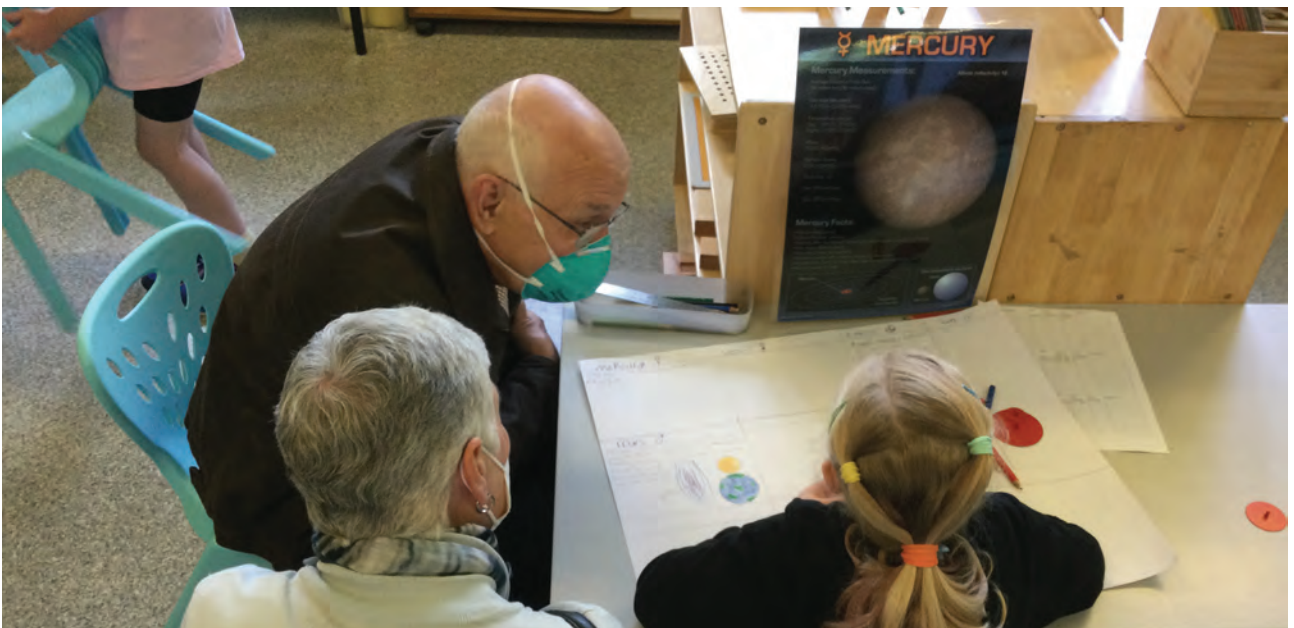
Cooinda children enjoyed welcoming the new students for 2022 into their classroom, getting to know Emilio, Valentina, Keerti, Lulu, Zen, Ithihaas and Thomas. During the transition visits, the transitioning students were introduced to a variety of concepts, assisted to undertake a variety of tasks and were shown the classroom layout, the expectations and rules of Cooinda. The current year 2s are very excited to be taking on the leadership roles in the new year, with many of the current year 1s excited to help them. We are sad to see many of our students leaving us at the end of the year including Mia, Maddy, Willam, Jayden, Leo, Gabriel, Maxim, Amiel, Jethro and Isabella. However, we wish them well moving forward and they will be greatly missed.

The high levels of energy continued with the children enjoying a special fun day with a trip to Collaroy Beach in week 8 with the rest of primary. They were allowed to participate in many fun activities over the day, appearing to enjoy themselves greatly.

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.







OOSH NEWS: BEFORE, AFTER SCHOOL CARE, HOLIDAY PROGRAM

by Surendrini Giritharan (OOSH Co-ordinator)

What a year we've had that's almost at an end. We've had lots of learnings, laughs and lasting memorable experiences.

For the first couple of weeks every one was kind of lost forgetting their usual OOSH routine (including us! 🙄), but soon everyone settled in and we got back to our daily routine. Our daily meditation/silent sitting has been a great success. We do this to calm and relax the children after school and believe it would be helpful in the children's future, particularly those who have learning difficulties or other behavioural issues. Staff work closely with children who have behavioural issues and also regularly communicate with families to explore ways to help children with their behaviour.

Our classroom is comprised of multiple age groups. Children from Pre- Primary & Primary all share the same classroom. This is based on Montessori's understanding of children's development. The younger children learn

from the older children, who in turn are able to be role models, exemplifying appropriate behaviour and work habits. Peer teaching and sharing of knowledge is encouraged and the older children take great pride and joy from teaching and leading their younger peers.

We also observed that there were number of pre-primary children learnt how to play different board games from their older peers during their afternoons in OOSH. At the end of each year, we clearly see positive change in almost every child, how they have built their confidence in talking, their language skills, sharing and participating in activities without any fear.

We provide materials and activities suited to all age groups for the children so that their time in the OOSH room is both enjoyable and educational. We also facilitate activities according to their interests and requests. We have purchased lots of new materials, including educational games, dress ups and various materials where they can show their creativity and imagination. You can see some of our children's highlights in our newsletter photos.



"At the end of each year, we clearly see positive change in almost every child, how they have built their confidence in talking, their language skills, sharing and participating in activities without any fear."



Our program covers different aspects of learning in a practical way which creates interest in most of the children. This is going to help them throughout their school years and build skills which they can take into adulthood. We always encourage children to spend time on their own to build their confidence and creativity. At the same time, we organise group indoor games, craft activities and outdoor activities to build their social interaction, sharing and confidence.

Finally, a BIG THANK YOU to all our wonderful staff members Christine, Montse, Kay Cindi, Katherine (Kay), Ruth, Silvia & Sun Mi.







BIG WORK IN 9-12

by Leticia Castellanos (Amaroo 9-12 Directress)

"Among the revelations the child has brought us, there is one of fundamental importance, the phenomenon of normalisation through work. Thousands and thousands of experiences among children...enable us to state that this phenomenon is the most certain datum verified in psychology or education. It is certain that the child's attitude towards work represents a vital instinct; for without work his personality cannot organise itself and deviates from the normal lines of its construction. Man builds himself through working. Nothing can take the place of work, neither physical well-being nor affection, and, on the other hand, deviations cannot be corrected by either punishment or example. Man builds himself through working, working with his hands, but using his hands as the instruments of his ego, the organ of his individual mind and will, which shapes its own existence face to face with its environment. The child's instinct confirms the fact that work is an inherent tendency in human nature; it is the characteristic instinct of the human race."

(Dr. Maria Montessori, 'The Secret of Childhood', Orient Longman Limited, 1951)



This quote from Dr Montessori clearly sets the importance of work in the Montessori environment. Our children build their learning through daily work and the contact with materials. They spontaneously socialise through work, learn from each other, and collaborate on projects together. In my years as a Montessori educator in the 6-12 environments, I have observed this beautiful tendency in children. I have observed how productive, creative, and intelligent work, with a precise degree of challenge, promotes a deep feeling of happiness, peace, self-confidence, the desire to help each other, and especially, the unfolding of auto-discipline (or what Dr Montessori calls normalisation) in the environment.

In this way, as Dr Montessori points out, work also helps balancing the emotions and behaviours of our children. They forget themselves to discover a new piece of material or to master previous learning. They forget themselves by helping others find the solution to a big math problem or developing an idea for a big project or experiment and collecting the materials they need. It is fascinating to observe an environment in which, over time, a work culture has been established, where we can see a variety of activities happening at the same time.

An environment where children “create, investigate, build, collaborate, think, learn, question, imagine and follow their passions”². If we think of a better society, aren't these qualities what make a workplace ideal? We are certainly preparing our children for life, and work is what Dr Montessori pointed out as the way to conquer the child's self-construction.

Not only children have the tendency to work. According to Dr Montessori, it is a human tendency, and as we mentioned, activity is the way in which the human being builds himself using the hand as its instrument. But this construction requires a significant amount of time. At Casa, the children need a cycle of three uninterrupted hours; however, in 6-12, it is important to provide long periods of concentration that can last more than three hours, as it will be difficult for them to achieve the big projects they want to do with little time. “What they learn by working on their own is invaluable and cannot be taught: independence, responsibility, collaboration, commitment, precision, review, perseverance, determination, and satisfaction with work done independently”³. The product of these efforts is what in Montessori we call Big Work.



Big Work is the children's tendency in the 6-12 environments to endeavour great projects that involve significant effort and excitement. "It is a work that is decided upon by the student and pursued with thought, care, deliberation, and an investment of time."⁴ In our 9-12 environments, we can every day observe this tendency through all the big work the children undertake. From animations with History topics, poems about the Geologic Eras, 5-pages alliterations, long divisions with more than 50 digits in the multiplier that require gluing rolls and rolls of paper, to stories with 9 chapters, square root problems that involve 9 pegboards, real size animal models, very long timelines, or studies of electricity building a wooden boat. Just to mention a few!

Bibliography

1 <https://montessori-ami.org/resource-library/quotes/childs-work>

2,3,4 <https://www.sims-ami.org/big-work-in-the-elementary-classroom/>

<https://www.thekavanaughreport.com/2022/01/making-space-for-big-work-in-second.html>





English Tasks	Date	Time Started	Time Finished	Signature
Spelling	4/04/22	9:18	9:28	[Signature]
comprehension	4/04/22	9:24	9:46	[Signature]
word study	4/04/22	9:50	10:49	[Signature]
handwriting	4/04/22	10:50	11:04	[Signature]
math	4/04/22	11:04	11:32	[Signature]
reading	5/04/22	8:40	8:54	[Signature]
math	6/04/22	8:42	8:56	[Signature]
comprehension	5/04/22	9:01	9:17	[Signature]
study	5/04/22	9:20	9:33	[Signature]
reading	5/04/22	9:36	9:41	[Signature]
word study	5/04/22	11:17	11:35	[Signature]
creative writing	5/04/22	11:23	12:30	[Signature]
Mathematics Tasks	Date	Time Started	Time Finished	Signature
operations	4/04/22	11:41	11:49	[Signature]
word problems	4/04/22	11:53	12:04	[Signature]
Assigned task	4/04/22	12:07	12:28	[Signature]
multiplication	4/04/22	1:42	1:45	[Signature]
operations	5/04/22	9:45	9:55	[Signature]
word problems	4/04/22	9:57	10:11	[Signature]



A BUSY TERM 4 FOR ORANA AND AMAROO

by Rebecca Grimshaw (9-12 Orana Directress)

It was lovely to see the 9-12 Amaroo and Orana students return to school in Term 4 after a busy first semester. We started off Term 4 with our preparation of the end of year production of the Wizard of Oz.

The students were extremely busy learning their lines, practising their dance routines, costume making and prop making. They spent a few weeks at the end of the first semester writing and rehearsing their lines and preparing the back drop of Oz. On the night it was easy to see how much hard work all the students had put into their roles and dance routines as the whole performance was exceptional. We are very proud of their efforts, and they should be too. It was a magical evening.

During the term, the students of Amaroo and Orana visited Warragamba Dam. All the students had a wonderful time learning about the heritage of this site

and the importance it plays in Sydney's water supply. The students were able to go down into the Dam and were lucky enough to witness three gates open and the release of 24 thousand million litres of water, which is a rare occurrence. Among the many facts we learnt the one that holds valuable meaning is that Warragamba means 'water running over rocks' and the whole area holds a lot of meaning for the Aboriginal community. Our Going Out led to extensive work in the classroom around the water cycle, our water supply system, using less water, and the protection of water catchments.

There has been an explosion of Big Work in Amaroo and Orana with the students commencing large projects which require a long period of time to complete. The students have been learning about the importance of time management and what steps need to be completed when undertaking research from various resources. There has been a strong focus on analysing resources and paraphrasing information. The students have been learning about significant dates in history with a focus on The Gold Rush, First Contact



and Migration. Some of the Year 5 students have been enhancing their movie making skills by preparing an educational video to bring awareness and discuss social issues to highlight the importance of positive decision making and healthy friendships.

Some of the Amaroo and Orana students volunteered their time in assisting with the creation and packaging of the beeswax wraps with parents in our community. This was a creative and hands-on approach which highlights the importance of using alternatives to single-use plastic wraps. The students enjoyed learning about the processes involved in making beeswax wraps with their peers. Their work led to many classroom discussions about the impact plastic has on our environment and how we can all make small changes in our daily lives to find solutions to this ever-growing problem.

During the semester both the Amaroo and Orana students participated in debating with schools across Australia. This work enables and encourages the students to develop their higher-order and critical

thinking skills whilst enhancing their written and oral communication skills. Each debate requires the students to collaborate and research the chosen topic, organise, and present their best arguments. In addition to this the students also need to create on-the-spot rebuttal and prepare notes for their fellow speakers during the debate. This is not an easy task and all the students demonstrated their enormous capabilities of being able to work under this type of pressure and deliver well-thought-out rebuttal arguments.

Both the Amaroo and Orana students enjoyed taking part in the Cook4Good program with Kids Giving Back in Paddington. This was a very meaningful, humble, and valuable experience for the students as they prepared and cooked meals for Sydney's homeless community. As a whole group the students made 238 meals. What an amazing effort and achievement. The students were given a sense of empowerment and purpose as they worked together to create delicious meals for those in our society who have had some bad luck and find themselves homeless.



The Year 6 students began Term 4 designing their 2022 school jumpers and their celebration clay tiles for the Northside memory wall. In the past few weeks all the Year 6 students have been very busy working on their Book of Memories. This is a special time for the students as they work together to celebrate their successes while reflecting on their time at Northside. During this time the Year 6 students also prepared and cooked meals for each other to eat as a group while reminiscing about all of their enjoyable moments together throughout the years. A lot of memories were shared.

The Year 6 students also spent some afternoons in the Stage 1 environments working with the younger

children which was a huge success and a very significant time for the older students as they reach the milestone of completing their primary school education. They enjoyed working with the Montessori materials in these environments, reading with the younger children and taking part in outdoor activities.

During Term 4, we welcomed Amiel, Archie, Bao, Jayden, Joshua, Julian, Jethro, Leo, Mia, Madeline, Max, Rory, and Willam to Amaroo and Orana and are looking forward to working with them in our classrooms.



HOW TO SUPPORT THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT: AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

by Margaret Kroeger (Ngamuru Directress)

In 2017, Montessori Australia published a blog for parents, focusing on ways to support an Adolescent (or a soon to be Adolescent) within the family. While the tips were related to the home, they apply just as strongly to our high school program at Northside.

Why?

The blog and our Adolescent Program both have at the core, knowledge of the development, needs, sensitivities and tendencies of the Adolescent.

"The chief symptom of adolescence is a state of expectation, a tendency towards creative work and a need for the strengthening of self-confidence." (Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence, p.63)

Strategies recommended for the home also have a place in an academic setting.

To illustrate this connection, extracts from the bog are featured below in red. The way the tips are enacted in the high school appear in black.

How to Support the Emerging Adolescent

Adolescents are emerging from childhood and preparing themselves for their adult role. The period of adolescence, like the period of infancy, is characterised by significant physical, intellectual and social change. Parents who have become used to their primary-aged child may suddenly find their emerging adolescent has a new set of needs. Approaching adolescence, children who were socially confident may suddenly appear awkward. Children in good health may suddenly appear vulnerable in body and mind. Adolescent changes can be intense and accompanied by strong emotions.

One of the ways in which parents can help the emerging adolescent through this delicate period is by respecting the transformation process. In order to become a robust capable adult, the adolescent needs to explore questions of identity - Who am I? Where do I fit in? What am I good at? What contribution can I make to the world? Parents can support this exploration in many ways by offering meaningful opportunities.

At the Adolescent Program at Northside, we have built in a range of opportunities for students to develop new skills, to interact with new people and to find authentic links with the community. We invite guests



"The chief symptom of adolescence is a state of expectation, a tendency towards creative work and a need for the strengthening of self-confidence."

- Maria Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p.63

regularly to speak to the students including council members, artists in residence, actors from the Bell Shakespeare Company, local business representatives, farmers, Indigenous historians, sustainability experts, former graduates, and experts with a passion. We are 'off campus' one day a week visiting farms, libraries, national parks, universities, museums, multicultural restaurants and local businesses. Next year as part of our camping experiences, we will visit an independent high school in Jindabyne, a wind farm in Crookwell and a Montessori Adolescent Program in Lower Hutt, New Zealand. We will also build up a connection with Montessori Adolescent students in Mexico via Zoom, letters and video exchanges. We want our students to explore this world, to develop their interests and to view learning as a life-long endeavour. Our work in literature studies, Socratic Seminars, establishing a collaborative range of micro-economies, peer teaching, group music ensembles and community building within the class, also gives the Adolescent at Northside a mirror to consider who they are, what role they play with each other and most importantly, who they would like to become.

We know that in this exploration, students will adopt different identities and different roles - some more successful than others. Dr. Montessori likened this age group to young children in the First Plane (0 - 6-year-olds). She considered Adolescents 'social newborns'

entering the adult world gingerly and with great vulnerability. We understand that toddlers can become overwhelmed, will try new skills, wobble and fall down. At times, their emotions can be extreme. As a society, we see this as part of the growing process. By making mistakes, they will refine their skills and emerge stronger. This is true for our Adolescents too.

"The adolescent must never be treated as a child, for that is a stage of life that he has surpassed. It is better to treat an adolescent as if he had greater value than he actually shows than as if he had less and let him feel that his merits and self-respect are disregarded."

(Maria Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 72)

That is not to say that 'anything goes' in the high school. Montessori was very clear that any behaviour contrary to the best interests of the group should be addressed and redirected. We do this through conferences, class meetings and one on one conversations. It is done respectfully but clearly - mindful of the fragility of Adolescents.

"To let the child (Adolescent) do as he likes when he has not yet developed any powers of control is to betray the idea of freedom."

(Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 204)



Offer meaningful opportunities to serve

Adolescents are looking for a part to play. They wonder about their role and place in society and seek ways in which they might contribute. Emerging adolescents may suddenly become interested in a new hobby or may express a strong interest in helping those less fortunate. When we provide meaningful opportunities for adolescents to serve society and the world at large, we provide reassurance and enable them to strengthen their self-confidence.

At Northside, we quickly discovered that the Adolescents cared about sustainability and the future of the world. They had a keen sense of social justice. They were aware of threats to the environment and wanted to do something about it. They created their business 'Planet Pens' where, thanks to the kind donations from the school community and Jack and Co, we have been able to collect, clean and sort thousands of pieces of plastic that might otherwise have ended up in land fill. We are now producing the most amazing pens that will be on the market early next year. It has been a long process of trial and error. The boys have tried different heating methods, moulds, and techniques with many setbacks along the way. They supported each other and always had the attitude that every mistake moved them one step closer to success. Their motivation stayed high because they were working side by side on a project that they felt could really make a difference. It is this drive to serve and to work collaboratively that has been recognised in grants and awards by Ku-ring- gai Council , Keep Australia Beautiful Committee and NGS Super. The Adolescents will continue to be involved next year

in Bush Regeneration as well as working with the Elderly to develop computer skills as part of an E-Safety initiative. Some of the students are also exploring ways we could collect and repair bikes to send to children in need in Australia and overseas. These student driven initiatives speak to the need of the Adolescent to be proactive and empathetic agents of change.

Offer meaningful opportunities for participation in adult endeavours

The emerging adolescent is still a child, but gradually becoming more adult-like. Adolescents strive for a higher stage of independence and are attracted to adult life. Enabling them to interact or work side-by-side with strong role-modeling adults helps them develop a moral code to keep freedom and responsibility in balance. Observing or hearing about adult work is not enough. The adolescent must experience the possibilities of life that are beyond the home and classroom.

The 'Planet Pens' initiative involves many adult concepts and expectations. The students regularly hold business meetings and make important decisions as a team. The Quality Control Officer has high expectations and will let peers know if the work is not up to standard. There have been very involved discussions on how best to spend the grant money received and what price point is best for the pens. They have held meetings with Geert A. Hendrix, CEO of 'Farmwall' explaining their business model and receiving advice. It is these real experiences that are so important for the Adolescents. It has allowed them to dip their toes into an adult world.



Offer meaningful opportunities for self-expression

Emerging adolescents crave freedom of expression and may develop a strong self-focus. They may seek to express their individuality through avenues such as new hair or dress styling, through using language in a different way, or through engagement in artistic pursuits such as dance, music or painting. These pursuits may offer adolescents much-needed new challenges at a time when their capacity for some types of intellectual work has temporarily decreased.

In Term 4, the students have been exposed to a range of artistic experiences including documentary making, acting with Bell Shakespeare Company, sculpting and making collaborative artworks about Shakespeare. The students have created instruments out of found materials. Using pieces of an old hose, wood scraps, a broken xylophone, plastic buckets and an old biscuit tin, the boys have been highly inventive making a range of wood wind and percussion instruments. Not everything has worked, and many changes have occurred from first sketch to final instrument. It has consumed them and their desire to problem solve and perfect has been tangible. There have been meaningful applications for Mathematics, Physics and Geometry. The work of the hands was a wonderful vehicle for the work of the mind. The group have really bonded through music whether it be as part of their guitar ensemble or with their new 'sustainability' band.

“Being active with one's own hands, having a determined practical aim to reach, is what really gives inner discipline. When the hand perfects itself in a work chosen spontaneously and the will to succeed is born together with the will to overcome

difficulties or obstacles; it is then that something which differs from intellectual learning arises. The realisation of one's own value is born in the consciousness.”

(Maria Montessori, From Childhood to Adolescence, p. 87)

Adolescents still need to know that they are loved and that people have faith in them. Offering meaningful opportunities is a way in which parents can express unconditional love for their emerging adolescents during a stage when the adolescents may seek to be more physically distant.

As educators we also strive to convey a message of support and understanding as we challenge the students academically and socially. We have faith in our students and deep respect for their work in self construction. It has been an honour to work with Adolescents in our inaugural year, and we look forward, with immense excitement, for the future of our high school program.

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