



**Peninsula  
Montessori  
Centre**

# Newsletter

Montessori Pre-school  
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## ***A Word from CAM !***

What a busy term it has been at PMC. No wonder it has flown by. This edition of the newsletter is full of the things that have been happening and what's coming up. Recent PR at the Teddy Bears' Picnic, Karingal Kids Arvo and National Playgroup Open Day have all helped promote our school. This has enabled us to continue to welcome new families. We have also welcomed new staff into our community and the committee is continuing the process of interviewing for a new directress. The children have been enjoying their time experiencing everything from cooking to woodwork, and plans are underway for the next round of renovations. To find out more and have your say keep on reading and come along to our next Parents Meeting on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March.

Earlier this term we were all touched by the devastating bushfires that swept across Victoria. As a practical way of helping survivors of the fires, some PMC families have decided to join the 'blanket initiative' and knit woollen squares which can then be sewn together into blankets. Winter is approaching and many people will be living in temporary accommodation as they continue rebuilding. These blankets are a practical way of helping them stay warm and showing your support. If you would like to help knit some squares please check out the noticeboards for more details.

Have a safe and fun holiday

Cam Whillas  
Chairperson

## ***Staying Involved***

Come along to the first 2009 Parent Meeting

Date: Monday 30 March 2009

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Casa Bella

### AGENDA REVIEW

- Bushfire Info; PMC Action Plan
- Casa Allegra; Renovations, Including floor
- Sanding, Painting and new floor coverings
- New woodworking bench
- New cooking equipment
- Garden program
- PMC 25 years
- What your committee is doing
- Staff, language and music programs
- Constitution
- Parent contributions / suggestions

## ***Looking for Assistance***

**JUST YOUR TIME - Pack- Up and Unpack Days**

We need Volunteers to help with the end of term Pack up **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April** and unpack day **Monday the 20th April**.

This year we have a couple of Mums who are happy to look after the kids in the playground so that parents can help out with the pack-up while the children are playing together in the garden.

This term we need a few extra hands for both pack up and unpack days as there are some exciting changes happening during the holidays and we will need to do some preparation for these.

A notice will be placed on the board outside Casa Allegra and Casa Gioia. Please print your name on the list. Please come along and help out! We need you!

**UTENSILS - Kitchen Equipment**

We are renewing and updating the Cooking equipment for the children including utensils and baking equipment. There will be a list of some of the equipment that the classrooms need outside Casa Allegra and Casa Gioia. Please have a look and see if you can contribute in any way. Search your third drawer down and see if you have some interesting piece of Kitchen Paraphernalia that the children can use.

**ONE MORE PERSON - Fundraising**

Is there anybody out there that could help Barb with this position? This is a big Job and a couple of people working on this together will really help the school raise some vital funds.

**NEWSPAPERS - Kitchen Garden**

New above ground Herb and Veggie Gardens are going in after the holidays and we need heaps of newspapers to line the bottoms so the grass does not grow through. Can everybody please save your newspapers and bring them into school. We will need about 6 wheelbarrows full so keep 'em coming!

**GARDENERS – Vegetable Gardens**

Anyone who has an interest in assisting with the maintenance of the vegetable gardens around the school please speak with Sara.

***What's Been Happening in the Classroom?***  
***Casa Allegra***

**Program**

The children in Casa Allegra are busy selecting and using activities from all the areas in the room. They have established good cycles of work and are very settled into the routines of the day. *Families* is an ongoing topic that is often revisited, "Our Families" board will remain up for the year so we would invite your child to please bring a family photograph for the board. As well as the children preparing their own morning snack (with our homemade bread) the children are now going to start making their own humus. The group has also been taking great pleasure in the cooking activities making bread, zucchini muffins, banana cake and sushi. As a teacher it is very rewarding to observe the children's enthusiasm and joy for learning.

The children have enjoyed making their own globes of the world identifying and labelling the continents; it is an exciting time to observe them independently making the globes and spontaneously singing the Seven Continents song. Other songs that are sung on impulse as they work in the room are the beautiful African songs that they are learning in music on Thursdays with Andy and Valanga.

**Kalimba Woodwork Project**

Andy and Valanga have introduced the children to an African musical instrument called the Kalimba. The Kalimba consists of a set of tuned metal or bamboo tongues of varying length fitted to a board or box, their free ends being twanged by the player's thumbs and fingers.

Thanks to Dave (Asha's Dad) for sourcing the wooden materials and cutting all the templates and to Andy and Valanga. The children are all involved in a long term project of making and decorating their own musical instrument.

### **End of Term Easter Celebration**

We will celebrate end of term with an Easter egg hunt, a cooking activity, making Bilby ears, games and music.

Finally, Sara has decided to reduce her hours and only work in Casa Gioia. We wish to thank Sara for being a wonderful assistant in our room and for all the amazing work she has put in to the care and education of the children during her time here. We wish her well with her other work at PMC and hope that she will join us soon and often in a parent capacity for various special activities.

Georgie, Julie, Tarita and Carolyne

### *Casa Gioia*

It is good to see the younger children settling in and finding their place in the group. We have been singing songs to practise remembering everyone's names, though a lot of the children are already familiar with each other from playgroup. We would like to welcome Ashley (and his family) who started in Casa Gioia a couple of weeks ago. Again starting in the playgroup has helped to make this a smooth transition to Casa Gioia.

Last week we had an investigation of different types of fruit. This involved discoveries using most of the senses such as sight, smell, touch and taste. It also involved quite some discussion amongst the group and we talked about many of the characteristics and differences in the types of fruit; heavy-light, big-small, soft-hard, smooth-rough, sweet-sour etc. I would love to continue this exploration of fruit so if you would like to find something interesting with your child and bring it in that would be great. All the children were very keen to have a taste, especially a few drops of lemon juice squeezed onto a teaspoon!

You may have noticed that since the last working bee we now have an open compost heap in the corner of the Casa Gioia garden. The children rake fallen leaves and use the wheelbarrow to add them to the heap, and also to empty the classroom's compost bin out onto it. We want to add other things such as lawn clippings, straw and newspaper (we will rip it up with the children) so if you would like to bring any of these to school it would be appreciated. I think that creating links between home and school, including discussions about what we are doing at school with your children and bringing in things to contribute (such as something for the compost heap, an interesting fruit, a book from the library that could be of relevance to what we are looking at) can only benefit the children. It shows that you are interested in their learning and it enriches everyone's experience.

Lunch times have become more formalised this term, sitting together at the tables inside with place mats, usually after a time in the big garden. If the children want to eat on arrival we are encouraging them to make use of the food preparation area to peel a carrot, cut a banana or butter a biscuit. This extra structure is working well and does replicate more closely the routines followed in the big group.

As Easter and the school holidays are approaching, we would like to have a small Easter Celebration the last week of term - ie. Tuesday 31st March and Thursday 2nd April. The children will continue to attend their normal sessions and we will have some special activities like making an Easter basket, decorating bunny or bilby ears, and also an egg hunt on both days. I would like to check with

parents/families if this is OK. The hunt would be with small solid eggs in the Casa Gioia garden, the children would end up with three small eggs to take home in their basket. We are happy to discuss alternatives with anyone who may have concerns or other preferences.

An Easter song we have been singing recently is

**"Little Peter Cotton Tail"**

Little Peter Cotton Tail, hopping down the bunny trail,  
hippety hoppety Easter's on its way.  
Bringing for the girls and boys,  
baskets full of Easter toys,  
hippety, hoppety, happy Easter day!

Thank you to Carolyne for filling in for Sara recently.  
Charlotte and Sara

***Money Money Money***  
***FUNDRAISING***

**Caring for Kids raffle - award-winning fundraising activity**

Each year in Term 2, KPV (Kindergarten Parents Victoria) runs the "Caring for Kids raffle". Over the past 12 years KPV have had success in raising over a million dollars for the early childhood sector - a great fundraising achievement.

In term 2 PMC will be distributing raffle books supplied by KPV and we are asking each family to take one book of 20 tickets to sell. Each ticket sold guarantees \$1.00 to our school.

If you think you can sell more than your allocated 20 tickets please contact me so I can order more books.

**Thanks, Barb Sherry**

***Keeping PMC Looking Good - Maintenance***

What's new? Well exciting news, it could be lovely polished floorboards and fresh new paint for Casa Allegra. We are currently finalizing quotes and planning for the work to be completed in the upcoming term holidays, updates at the forthcoming Parent Meeting.

Term 2 Working Bee will be on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 9am to 3pm. Please check the roster on all notice boards if you have any doubt about whether you are joining us for another action packed day.

A big thank you to the Hall family, Richard Hall for his ongoing hard work on our lawns and to Kirsten for stepping in to fill the gap in our lunch roster for the next Working Bee.

For those who have noticed the disappearance of our shade structure in Casa Allegra, it took off on a stormy night and needed repairs. We would like to thank Cameron Whillas who is organising its repair and return to former glory.

If you have ideas for special projects please let us know, we love to have new ideas from our families. Getting involved as much as you can is a great way to extend the experience for you and your child or children here at PMC.

Sara, Dean and Zac, Maintenance

## ***Let's get out there !!! - Publicity***

Debbie Uboldi has kindly taken on the role of Publicity, thank you.

This term she has been working very hard to circulate and ensure the presence of Peninsula Montessori is in the local community. Debbie spent all day at **The Teddy Bears Picnic** and is happy to report the success of the event.

PMC had a marquee at this event to promote our kindergarten and playgroup. The playgroup is very important to PMC and families are able to meet Charlotte and discuss how families can nurture their children from an early stage in their lives. The playgroup makes for a smoother transition into Casa Gioia as the families enter into their Montessori journey. It was a successful event in that we were a presence there and may interested families visited our marquee.

### **Karingal Kids Arvo – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

We had a table set up to promote our centre at this event and invited all families to attend by placing notices on our boards advertising it.

The afternoon started out with some reorganising of the event due to the rain, thankfully plan B was to move the event indoors. The children had a fabulous time. It was great to see so many Montessori family faces from our centre and the primary school supporting the event and having fun.

There were a few playgroup centres set up in the Karingal Neighbourhood House:

Our Playgroup had set up tables for the children to work with play dough, opening latch-locked boxes with jewels inside one and an easy-to-use rebid cube in the other; we also had the ice-cube tray and cotton balls.

There were plenty of activities for the children both inside and out and a very well organised event. All activities were free and fabulous.

A lot of networking was done. We are going to participate in the 'Karingal Schools Early Years Network' that meets once a month. Our aim of the event and as we go is to boost awareness of our centre and the primary school as a desired educational experience.

We are so proud of our school including the services and support given to our children and families; the beautiful space and the excellent calibre of staff. We want the broader community to know that we are alive and well.

Thanks to: Cameron, Jacinta, Charlotte, Helene, Mila (for looking after Sienna) Liz (for looking after Elijah) and Ammie from Anglicare for organising this event.

### **National Playgroup Week**

PMC has organised advertising for this event in the form of flyers and posters which have been distributed around the local area and shops. We have also registered with Playgroup Victoria to help promote our centre, this will give us a free listing on their website. Thanks to Juanita (Katika's mum) for helping distribute the flyers.

### *Bursar's Report*

First Term has seen approximately 35 enquiries about our school, which is great, however our conversion rate into enrollments is not high.

We have had somewhere between 5 and 10 start in Playgroup and only a few direct enrollments into Casa Gioia. If we can maintain Charlotte's good conversion rate from Playgroup to Casa Gioia, then these numbers will start to flow through the system toward the end of the year.

Experience talking to prospective parents highlights that the awareness of Montessori teaching methods is very low. Over the long term I think we need to work with the Montessori Associations to educate the general public. In the short term it is important that when we speak to friends we explain what Montessori is about. I know from personal experience that it can take a while to get your head around this, but keep persisting and you will find your understanding will quickly improve. We have almost rebuilt our website and I intend to incorporate some "What is Montessori?" information.

The committee is always looking for new ways to promote the school (especially cost effective ones) so please forward some suggestions to the committee.

Joel Seagren  
Bursar

## *Staff Liaison Report*

### **New language teacher**

We have a new language teacher joining the children in Casa Allegra each Tuesday morning to teach French. Mario is a business student at Monash University who taught French to school children in country Victoria where he lived prior to moving to Frankston to begin his studies. Mario recently visited the children and introduced himself and worked with the children on colours. The children sang some French songs to him and were delighted with the experience of saying the colours in French.

### **Staffing in Casa Allegra**

Georgie has kindly agreed to stay with us at least for another term as we are still in the process of finding a suitable replacement for her role as directress. Julie will continue her great work with the children on Wednesdays and our assistants will continue to be Tarita and at times Carlyne. One of the main difficulties in finding a new directress is that to be counted as a qualified staff member the directress must have recognised early childhood qualifications in addition to Montessori qualifications. Whilst we have had several wonderful applicants with Montessori qualifications we do not have a suitable applicant with both. We will keep you informed on this process next term.

As outlined in letters to families throughout the term we are very lucky to have added 2 relief staff to our team, Carlyne and Roshini. Carlyne will be well known to some of you as last year's hardworking chairperson. Thank you for making all our new staff members welcome and recognising that all our staff at PMC work very hard to ensure the best possible environment for our children.

Liz Knutsen, Staff Liaison

### **What Montessori meant by THE NORMALIZED CHILD :**

A Montessori classroom is an exciting learning environment for young children. Low shelves are filled with boxes, trays, and baskets and each of these filled with colourful, intriguing objects for sorting, sequencing, mixing, and arranging. In time, each child learns about sizes, shapes, colours, sounds, maths, reading, writing, science, and geography.

At first, a child may select one, then another tray, explore its contents, and return it to its shelf location. Gradually, the child lengthens the time spent exploring and discovering. Movements slow, becoming precise and disciplined. The concentration extends and they can maintain focus and attention. The child begins to locate the ideas embedded in the learning materials and the surrounding environments. This is the process of **normalization**

Normalization is perhaps not the best choice of word. It suggests that teachers will help children who are not normal to become normal. This is not what Dr Montessori meant to suggest at all.

When children who typically have short attention span learn to focus, concentrate and ultimately have satisfaction from their work that's how the process of Normalization can be described. In her book "The Normalized Child" Kathleen Futrell describes when Maria Montessori observed in amazement when the children from the ghetto began to respond to their new environment. The children were becoming normalized.

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***Important Dates***

<p><b>Term 1</b></p> <p>March 30<sup>th</sup> PMC Parent Meeting                  April 2<sup>nd</sup> Last Day School                  April 3<sup>rd</sup> PACK UP DAY</p>	<p><b>Term 2</b></p> <p>April 20<sup>th</sup> Unpack day – no children                  April 21<sup>st</sup> Term 2 Commences                  April 26<sup>th</sup> Working Bee                  June 8<sup>th</sup> Queen’s Birthday                  (no school)                  June 26<sup>th</sup> Term 2 Concludes</p>
<p><b>Term 3</b></p> <p>July 13<sup>th</sup> Unpack day – no children                  July 14<sup>th</sup> Term 3 Commences                  July 19<sup>th</sup> Working Bee                  September 18<sup>th</sup> Term 3 Concludes</p>	<p><b>Term 4</b></p> <p>October 5<sup>th</sup> Unpack day – no children                  October 6<sup>th</sup> Term 4 Commences                  October 11<sup>th</sup> Working Bee                  November 3<sup>rd</sup> Melbourne Cup Day                  (no school)                  December 18<sup>th</sup> Term 4 Concludes                  Pack up day</p>

***Staff & Committee Members***

<p><b>Staff</b></p> <p>Casa Allegra                  Directresses Georgie Brown                  Julie Savage                  Assistants Tarita Karika                  Carolyne Rogers</p> <p>Casa Bella                  Playgroup Charlotte Astbury</p> <p>Casa Gioia                  Directress Charlotte Astbury                  Assistants Sara Moore                  Carolyne Rogers</p> <p>Administration Helene Brown</p>	<p><b>Committee</b></p> <p>Chairperson Cameron Whillas                  Secretary Mish Eisen</p> <p>Treasurer Lisa Agar                  Bursar Joel Seagren                  Staff Liason Liz Knutsen (Craig)                  Rosters Celia Dwyer                  Maintenance Sara &amp; Dean Moore                  Fundraising Barbra Sherry                  Newsletters Suzanne Smales</p>
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