

Dear Families of Lake Park Kindergarten, thank you for a fabulous year as we wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas.

A special thank you to staff and the 2017 Committee of Management (COM) who together, ensure the smooth running of the kindergarten to provide a fulfilling and enriched early years experience for all the children, in a safe and happy environment. Thank you to all outgoing COM members for another year gone by and thank you to those who are going another round with us in 2018. A special thank you to Kerry Lyons, our outgoing Vice President/Acting President, who has been an invaluable member of the Executive team and will join us next year as a general member.

Recognising our staff are the key to our success we kicked off the year with a staff professional development workshop where we invited an independent early years expert to review our educational and programming practices and work with staff to enhance the program, ensuring a consistent, balanced and transparent program is available for the children and families at Lake Park. The staff embraced the outcomes of the workshop and have worked tirelessly all year to deliver a well rounded, engaging and stimulating program for your children where play based, emergent curriculum and intentional teaching styles have all been practised. Antoniette Altobelli as our Educational Leader has led this initiative, ensuring our programming is consistent across all groups and staff have the necessary resources required to deliver an exceptional program.

As part of our continued focus to maintain and embed the culture of Lake Park Kindergarten into our programming, the COM continued with an initiative from last year and conducted a survey of families and staff, asking each what values were most important to them. Recognising that it was important to include the children's voice in this process, the children were presented with the top five values from the survey results and using pictures to explain the values, the teachers were able to discover which were most important to the children and narrowed them down to three core values; Respect, Curiosity and Inclusion. These values are to be embedded into the programming and will be used as a moral compass for all that we do at Lake Park kindergarten,

2017 also saw the beginning of our major outdoor redevelopment project. Works started in January with the first stage comprising the removal of the old sandpit and a new sandpit located at the rear of the yard alongside a new and improved mud patch with functioning water pump and trough. Approval was also obtained for stage two of the works which saw the creation of our amphitheater area to allow for outdoor community gatherings, a deck for our boat area to make it easier to access and provide a better flow with the rest of the yard, changes to the fort area to link the fort to its surrounds and promote more imaginative play, along with the creation of our hut and bike storage shed. In addition, a dedicated water tank was installed allowing easier access to water for the children to water the new grass, fruit trees, climbers and our veggie beds.

Wanting to capitalise on our great outdoor area and improve Lake Park's commitment to sustainability we trialed the services of Little Sprouts, run by Carolyn Luder. Carolyn has been invaluable to kick start our vegetable garden program and provide valuable advice and direction to both teachers and children on sustainability; helping to embed sustainability and environmental education into our centre practices. During term 2 Carolyn conducted a garbage audit and provided suggestions for improving sustainable practice at the centre, including the collection of toilet rolls and tissue paper in the staff bathroom, the use of shredded paper in the office for the compost, and altering the setup of the waste bins in the

main room to make it easier for staff and children to recycle effectively. In Term 3, Little Sprouts' set up the centre's worm farm and composting program, which the children have been very enthusiastic about, enjoying contributing organic waste such as banana peels and apple cores alongside the staff also receiving Professional Development in worm farming and composting. During Term 4 the focus has been on establishing a kitchen/garden program, which was assisted by the kind donation from Bunnings of packets of seeds, seedlings, compost and mulch, gardening tools and gloves for the children, wood and paint for signage, and a bin for collecting leaves and other compost materials. Fast growing fruit and vegetable varieties have been planted so that produce can be harvested prior to the end of the year and utilised in cooking activities for the children. The COM are pleased to announce that we will be continuing our partnership with Little Sprouts into 2018.

In addition Emma Antonetti, our Grants Officer, was successful in securing a Junior LandCare grant of \$550, which enabled us to register for the Moreland Council initiative; the Victorian Pleasurable Food Education Package by the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation. As part of the program we received a worm farm for the centre along with a worm-farming incursion delivered by Wyndywood Worm Farm.

An initiative to improve our website and communication with families was also instigated in 2017, led by Linda Cross, our Newsletter and Website Coordinator. Linda partnered with Carolyn from Little Sprouts to promote the centre's sustainability activities via the newsletter, social media and website and organised for a professional photographer to take photos of our centre in order to update/refresh our website. The resulting images of the photo shoot will be evident shortly on our website so please make sure you check it out and "like" our Facebook. Linda has also undertaken the review and trial of our new communications app, Skoolbag, which we intend to roll out to our 2018 families. The app is used widely by a number of early childhood centres and primary schools to assist in the communication with families, streamlining access to newsletters, notices and events throughout the year, reducing the reliance on emails and complimenting our sustainability goal of reducing paper throughout the centre.

We also had a number of well-attended social events throughout the year with our welcome picnic, the annual winter solstice lantern walk, a movie night, dress up disco and our fabulous Art Show. It was fantastic to see the community come together and celebrate these special events throughout the year. Our fundraising initiatives were also in full swing throughout 2017, culminating in our first ever Bunnings Sausage Sizzle which was an astounding success with the great weather encouraging a continuous flow of customers, so much so that we went through a total of 95kgs of sausages! For the 2017-year we raised a total of approximately \$3,700. A big thank you to our fundraising and social committee, Kelly and Liusha!

Have a safe and happy Christmas and New Year from the staff and COM of 2017.

Lou Roncon – President, Lake Park Kindergarten