

Kindergarnerings

NEW ZEALAND
FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION INC.

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' MEN CAN DO ANYTHING, TOO ! '

The rarity of the kindergarten teacher, genus male, prompted an article in a Northland newspaper about one of this rare breed.

David Butler, teacher at Onerahi, finds job satisfaction in working with the horde of 4-year-olds who, he finds, regard him as both teacher and playmate. With a two-year-old son of his own, David understands the dilemma of parents who entrust their children to the care of others - ' a good experience, but can you trust them? ' But he feels that a male in a traditionally 'women - only' area brings a different view-point and balance.

David enjoys the challenge of his chosen career. He commented, " In the years between birth and five, children probably learn more than they are ever going to learn again. To be involved in that rapid change is exciting. Every day here is different - it is never the same." However, like all teachers, he has had brought home to him the realities of his chosen career - not just influencing children, but cleaning up after them!

David mentioned his concern at the increasing interest in violence among the children he works with. He believes that the community would benefit from more sensitive men, and that gentle, caring males should be encouraged to enter areas which may be regarded as foreign to them, such as child-care or nursing.

GREETINGS FROM ASHBURTON

We hope your Awareness Week was as successful as ours, and that you were rewarded by the involvement of many people in your activities.

Our week started out with a stall on 'Boulevard Day', organised by our 5 Executive members. It was adorned with children's art work, etc. Three of the kindergartens took the opportunity to do some fund-raising by selling sweets, raffles, play dough, delicious lunches, and recipe books. Executive sold a donated raffle and drinks to cover our costs.

The day set the mood for what was to be a great week. An article by our President on the history and structure of the kindergarten was a fore-runner to a series of articles, one from each kindergarten, in our local papers. The day's events were included on the local radio's Bulletin Board.

A large display in the Permanent Building Society's window on the main street was set up by our President and Publicity Week Convenor. Each kindergarten held open days, with one day attracting 30 people to one afternoon session. Pot luck lunches, general learning aid displays, and a hugely successful fair were all held during the week.

The Aubery Mason Kindergarten in Tinwald celebrated its silver jubilee that week, and marked the occasion with the publication of a superb recipe book, and an afternoon tea and tree-planting on Saturday which were attended by many past staff and pupils. There was also a window display to focus attention on the celebrations.

Another of our kindergartens organised a terrific raffle, the first prize being a return trip for two anywhere in New Zealand with Ansett.

On Friday, 2 October, we held a Teddy Bears Picnic at the Domain. It was an overwhelming success, with many teddies attending accompanied by their owners - children, parents, grand-parents, and invited guests. Cookie Bear, Toy World Bear, and Footrot Flats Dog also attended, and distributed sweets and cookies much to the delight of over 200 children.

To wind up our week, we held a video evening in the College auditorium, with a selection of videos -

"Keeping Ourselves Safe"- presented by Mr Bernie Quinn, a trained Education Officer working in the Youth Aid section at Christchurch Central Police Station. The videos were from both the old 'stranger-danger' series and from newer ones which form part of the new health syllabus in schools. Those present were encouraged to express their views, and the evening was both enjoyable and successful.

As Convenor of the Awareness Week, I found it both entertaining and successful. I hope that you all had as much fun as we did, & enjoyed a good response to your activities.

DIANE BATCHELOR

" The money or the bag? Take her money!!"

Another quotable Conference quote. Source anonymous, but guessable ! " Little Associations go far to making this Conference the vibrant pulsating event - it could so easily be!!"

PANIC NOT !! IT'S JUST A NORMAL KINDERGARTEN WEEK !!

Quite a normal week, this Awareness Week !

Phones rang at 7 a.m., with news of a hostage drama at Bell Block. The police asked us to close the kindergarten, and it was used as a base for operations, as it backed on to the street where the hostages were being held. The Senior Teacher was heard to remark during a telephone conversation, "Oops, there goes a man with a gun!", as somebody bounded over a fence. (Hasn't anyone told him kindergartens are non-violent places?)

The following day, it was a distraught mother who had heard her child screaming, but couldn't find her. Once again the Senior Teacher and the police had to try to calm the mother, and solve the problem.

On Friday, it was the Executive Officer's turn. A copy of a notice to parents of a kindergarten informing them of its imminent closure!! Just one Chairman's way of drawing attention to the fact that donations were at a low ebb. Once the letter had been despatched, he departed for a week's skiing, and the Executive Officer was left to work overtime to calm all concerned.

Kindergarten is never dull!!

(At least, in North Taranaki it isn't !)

*** Who was moved to comment, with reference to a proposal that an extra day be allowed at Conference for discussion, -" If you have one more day at Conference, you take a lot more in, and a lot seeps out the other end." ??

*** And just to show that one Association's good idea is another's inspiration, Whangarei has followed Ruahine's example, and organised a combined Gala Day - but included local Play Centres as well. Other developments of an original and successful idea?

*** A hint to the Executive. A breakfast for first time attenders was an excellent idea, but the crustiness of the croissants posed some problems for one lady. Crumbs was she embarrassed !!

OAMARU'S SPECIAL NEEDS PRE-SCHOOL GROUP

Although the need has long been recognised, the group has been operating only since last year, when a full-time teacher was seconded for 5 hours per week. This year we have a kindergarten teacher specifically employed to work with the Special Needs group.

A recent survey conducted by the North Otago Advisory Committee, which administers our group, showed a total of 88 children between 0 and 5 with a variety of special needs. All the local support services are making a concerted effort to see that these children are receiving the care and tuition necessary for individual improvement, and are maintaining regular contact to help with ideas for the continued development of both children and their families.

Our own group is run at a kindergarten for 3 hours each week. Five children attend the sessions, during which the teacher works within a normal programme assisting the children to participate in activities, and involving them in the play of the other children. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate, so that they too become involved with what is happening. It becomes a valuable parent education exercise.

The teacher home-visits new children, and finds it important to continue to home-visit during the time the children are in the group. Such visits encourage the child with play, and allow discussion with the parents about problems, or with ideas to help the individual child.

Our major concern in 1988 is funding. The needs of children and their families have been recognised, staff is available, but as yet no funds to operate the group have been confirmed. The Advisory Group has applied for funds locally, and from the Education Department, but as yet no decision has been received.

CHRISTINE TIDDY. Special Needs Teacher.

SANDY MASON . Association Member, Special Needs Committee.

Who was Wellington's Blythe representative at Conference ? Prue/Prue? Plue? Prune? Perhaps we shall never know!!!

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL AWARENESS WEEK

The highlight of the year so far, with all 9 kindergartens - staff, children, and parents - all joining in to make it a week to remember.

All kindergartens held open days. Two had birthday parties as well - Oaktree for its second, Albany for its first. Mahurangi in Warkworth joined in their local Kowhai Festival with a float & a stall, both of which received coverage in the newspaper. Hibiscus Coast, in Orewa, held a morning session in the town centre. Whangaparaoa held an open-air session on Saturday morning and displayed the children's art work. A pop band attracted the attention of the public, and the new Establishment Committee seized the chance to begin its fund-raising with a cake stall.

The other 6 kindergartens in the Association - Albany, Glamorgan, Oaktree, Rangitoto, Torbay & Taiāotea - banded together to hold a parade which stopped the traffic in Browns Bay on the Saturday morning. The Police Pipe Band and a marching team led the parade, and each kindergarten had a float with a different theme. We had the Old Woman in a Shoe, the Pied Piper, Old MacDonald complete with farm, and a group of children wearing the vehicles they had made out of cardboard. Bringing up the rear was a lovely big red fire engine. The parade went as far as the Village Green, where the staff had set up a huge kindergarten with all the usual activities. Some of the kindergartens also ran stalls, but public relations, not profit-taking, was the name of the exercise, so this was kept to a minimum. The whole event was most enjoyable, and made people in our area very aware of kindergarten and what it meant. Newspaper coverage of all events was excellent.

The feedback we have had since then has been wonderful. We hope that all other Associations were as pleased with the success of their efforts.

BARBARA PAGE. NORTHERN AUCKLAND ASSOCIATION

Conference's most unforgettable comment. During a discussion on parenting, "I'm sure everyone had the same feelings as I did when you decided to become a parent." Thank you. Hewitt.

The Patea Committee tackled the organisation of Awareness Week with enthusiasm and vigour. Patea is a close-knit community, and most people are aware of the service the kindergarten provides, and support its fund-raising ventures. The Committee formed to organise the week's activities saw a chance to give something back to the district, and went about arranging a small event for each day of the week.

A colouring-in competition, involving the local primary schools, brought in 180 entries. Art work & photos in a display in a shop brought an encouraging response - people were becoming aware that something was up ! Tuesday was an open day. Not a huge number took advantage of the opportunity, but those who did enjoyed the chance to observe and discuss. There was also a weight-guessing competition, where 7 local identities allowed their combined weight to become the object of local surmise. And the winner was only 2 pounds out. (A kilo, if you insist!) On Thursday evening, a pot-luck tea for kindergarten families, with a friendly magician to surprise and enthrall the young audience. On Friday the Committee should have rested, but the best was yet to come.

The Grand Mini-Gala/Hangi and Battens-Up Day was all set for Saturday. A treasure hunt for the children, while adults waited expectantly for their numbers to be called at the Battens-Up table. Stalls run by local organisations did a brisk trade, as did the candy floss machine and the hot dog / drink / donut stand. Betting on guinea pigs (!!), ferris wheel rides, and throwing wet sponges at rarely willing faces were all lots of fun, and with other amusement stalls gave the day a carnival atmosphere. The Hangi was the main attraction, and attracted over 400 people. The crowd remained for games, the announcement of competition winners, and the final spectacle - the "rescue" of an injured car accident victim by the Fire Service.

The week was a tremendous success. The image of Kindergarten as just a baby-sitting service was shattered, and replaced with an awareness that all those participating in the work of the kindergarten - staff, parents, and committee - are indeed working for the whole Patea community.

A SISTER KINDERGARTEN IN JAPAN

In February of this year, our Association was approached by a Japanese Private Kindergarten Association to find a N.Z. sister kindergarten. After a few informal visits, Myers Park was chosen. The staff and committee agreed, & worked hard in the months leading up to the return of a small group from Japan. Some of the art work of Myers Park children was selected to be printed on white T-shirts to be given as gifts to the visiting Japanese children.

On 22 July, Myers Park Kindergarten officially became Sister Kindergarten to Arita Kindergarten in Fukuoka. The group for the official visit was made up of teachers, children, parents, & a few administrators. The children, ranging in age from 4 to 13, gave a proficient recital of songs before the official signing. Afterwards, there was a multi-cultural luncheon organised by Myers Park, then more music, this time by our kindergarten children and others from local Kohanga Reo & Day Care groups. The musical items presented by both Japanese & N.Z. children were familiar to all.

The Japanese children also visited Devonport Kindergarten on the North Shore, and demonstrated their musical talents.

Professor Tomomatsu, President of Tokyo Private Kindergarten Association, would like to promote good will between Japanese and New Zealand people. During June & August, 1988 - the summer holidays in Japan - a conference of private kindergartens will be held in Fukuoka. The Professor hopes that teachers and representatives from at least 30 countries will attend.

VERONIQUE WILLSON A.K.A. Council.

North Taranaki pre-school educational organisations - kindergarten, KTA, Parents Centre, day care, Plunket, and Rudolph Steiner - elected 15 August as their grand gala day. Fruppet shows, stalls of all kinds, and raffles gave those attending, young and old, a way to personally profit and support in a non-taxing and pleasant atmosphere. For the organisers, enjoyable labour for local rather than national benefit.

And everybody was home in time to hear the results of that other 15 August event.

FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for the splendid response to the so-called yellow peril. I am not sure whether the timing of the reminder was particularly good, or whether you were all suffering from post-Conference enthusiasm. But, whatever it was, it worked !

Obviously Awareness Week produced a variety of responses from Associations and their communities. Most of the reports received were from those for whom the week worked well. It may well be that the success of such weeks bears some relationship to the size of the community involved. A larger Association commented that its kindergartens had had a lot of input for little result, and that more national media coverage could have had advantageous results for all. Perhaps next time ?

1988 promises (threatens?) to be an eventful year in education circles, with changes in view for us all. One thing won't change, however. I'd still appreciate plenty of contributions for the next edition of this newsletter!!

Best wishes for a peaceful Christmas, and a happy and not-too-upsetting New Year.

LYN BLOW

With New Year's resolutions, my mind is agile.
It is strong, but they are fragile !!

DEADLINE FOR APRIL ISSUE

MARCH 7th, 1988

ADDRESS FOR MATERIAL

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