

Thursday, 12th February 2015

Aurora Newsletter #1

For Your Calendar:

Term 1 Wednesday January 28th - Wednesday April 1st

Lunch and Working Bee Thursday 19th Feb 1-3pm – All parents invited to lend a hand!

Sunday 15th March Parent Talk with Lou Harvey-Zahra

Harvest/Easter Festival 9.45am-1pm, Wednesday April 1st (last day of term)

Dear Aurora Parents and Friends,

“Our aim is to interest the *whole* human being...”

Practical Advice to Teachers, Rudolf Steiner.

In my brief time here is already evident that the staff at Aurora have a wholistic approach to educating students. We have had a productive and exciting start to the school year. Our theme for this term, *big-hearted learning*, has been evident in the openness in approach of the staff and the generosity of spirit in the whole community.

Communication

This is the first Aurora Southern Highlands Steiner School newsletter. Our aim is to send you a newsletter ever two weeks. After consultation with members of the school community we have decided that this newsletter will be our main source of information for what's going on in the school. It will be distributed via email, hardcopy and, in the future, on our website.

Website

We hope that our new website will be up and running very soon. Buzzsaw, led by Peter Saw, has been contracted to set up the new website. We are now editing content for the site and will let you know when it is launched.

Staffing

In this small school we rely on the good will and volunteer time from our community members. We have been fortunate enough to receive sufficient support from government funding and parent contributions to allow us to employ enough staff to provide high quality class teachers, specialist teaching, excellent teacher to student ratios and beautiful physical surroundings. Here is an outline of the staff, their roles, on-site availability and their new email addresses for contact.

Language Teaching

We are currently looking for a suitable language teacher. We have a few possibilities and will be able to confirm the temporary appointment of a language teacher in the next two weeks. Foreign language teaching is an important part of Steiner education and we will do our best to work towards a rich foreign language program as the school grows.

Parent Involvement

We would like to encourage parents, grandparents and friends to become involved in the school. This can be an enriching experience for not only the students but others in the school community. Here are some ways you could help:

Wednesday and Thursday Reading Groups

Starting in Week 5 Kate will be having shared reading sessions with Year 2 and 3 students at 11.30. This will involve working one-to-one or in groups. Please contact Kate if you are able to help

Wednesday Afternoon Music

You are welcome to join our music sessions on Wednesday afternoons from 2.15pm. This will involve singing and playing instruments.

Lunch and Outdoor Classroom on Thursdays

We would like to start our school community BBQ and Outdoor Classroom sessions next week at 1pm-2.55pm. Please contact the school if you are able to help with set up and running BBQ and helping with some outdoor work afterwards. For our first session it will be a working bee to clean up the grounds and prepare the new entrance to the school.

Cleaning

Thank you to Jenny and Pascalle for helping with the cleaning on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. If you are able to help, please let us know.

Promotions and Communications

Thank you to Ellen, Pete, Nadia, Jane and Francis on the Comms team who did so much work towards getting our website, school branding and communications policy off the ground. If you have skills and could help us please let us know.

Friday Afternoon Bush walk and Picnic

Annabel will be leading the students on a walk every Friday afternoon. Please contact her if you are able to help.

Thank You

On a personal note I would like to thank all those people who have made me feel so welcome here at Aurora. It is the people that make a school and I already have the sense that we are blessed to have such a warm and generous bunch. Special thanks to all the Board members Francis, Joanna, Jane and Shirley who have put in many hours of volunteer time and care to establish firm ground. Thanks also to Anna our Chartered Accountant who has contributed her time and great skills. I look forward to a bright future for the school.

James Goodlet

Principal

Class 1-3 with Kate

Stepping into our second week together, the 'primary class' has already merged into a consolidated group. We have begun the term with a literacy main lesson. The frame story involves the adventures of a brother and sister – Jasper and Jenna who are on a quest to free the Goddess of the Waters and save their Kingdom. Their helper and guide is a magical being called Featherlight who (synchronistically) is able to talk to the animals thereby, bringing the 'Animal Fables' which are the focus of this main lesson.

The mark of a fable is that while the story is about animals, it is really describing a foible of human nature. Steiner's key indication with this main lesson is to let the image give the message to the child. So we do not elaborate on the 'moral' of the story. The impact of the story comes from the child immersion in the image: eg the quick superficial hare and the plodding but dependable tortoise. The two characters and their race together are what speak to the child's feeling nature. These stories provide texts that are used to build the underlying literacy skills leading to reading.

The class one children are being imaginatively introduced to the upper case consonants through the letters imbedded in the picture drawn on the board from the story.

The class two children are writing a text describing the pictorial image from the story. They are building a bank of sight words/high frequency words. And working on phonic patterns or word families drawn from the texts. Class three explores the basic elements of grammar and write their own text based on the story.

At Aurora our teaching methods are based on an innate respect for the child. We strive to nurture, and protect the young child's world. This is a foundation for later life. This involves meeting the child where they are at and not rushing them. To the young child magic is all around, in every leaf, in every stone. As adults we know the leaf as a eucalypt, the stone as granite, this knowledge is part of being an adult in the world, but when the world is known (observed) the mystery is gone. In all our education we celebrate the unique spirit of childhood.

You may be interested to know that on our first day together as a class group we discussed what class rules we should have, the children came up with quite a list! The one I liked the best was 'being kind'.

Kate Koch

Class 1-3 Teacher

Hello to Everyone from Jenny!

I am back again working with Kate on Mondays for Craft, on Wednesdays with Rosalie (with support from Joe) for Play group, with Annabel on Wednesdays for Music and singing games and having a Craft date on Friday mornings making table puppet dolls with Margaret Corbett. Please feel welcome to come if you are interested, starting next week 9.30 to 11 am.

After returning from my time in London with my family, I have been busy with work for the Vietnam Children's Project; joining with Thanh Cherry and Shirley Bell for the annual Newsletter as well as sending out thankyou letters to sponsors from various parts of the world.

Jan Macnamarra- Hammerton has been busy too organising a fundraiser for the VCP. Her daughter Kimberly Hammerton (a past student at Eukarima) graduated last year from the Eurythmy Course in Germany and is giving an inaugural performance at Harmony along with the local music group "Rapunzel's Party". (Please see the Invitation attached)

School Shop and Library – Coming Soon!

As we move into an exciting year we have many projects underway. We will be setting up the "Little Shop" in the new office space and will be stocking it with all the wonderful Steiner inspired goodies we have come to know and love. More to follow soon!

The old office space next to Kindergarten will soon be converted into a Library space for both Students and Parents.

Updates to School Contact Information

Kate Koch Class 1-3 teacher kate@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

Annabel Brown Kindergarten teacher annabel@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

Joanna P - Movement/Eurythmy/Speech teacher (Tuesdays)

joanna@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

Jenny - Craft (Mondays) jenny@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

Melissa Savill- Administration (Tuesdays and Thursdays) admin@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

James Goodlet- Principal (Wednesdays and Thursdays)

principal@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au

For matters concerning individual students please contact your child's class teacher.

For administration matters, please contact Mel on admin@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au or 4862 2300.

For whole school matter please contact me (James) on principal@aurorasteiner.nsw.edu.au or 0432212586