

Aurora



SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
STEINER SCHOOL

Tuesday 9th February, 2016

Newsletter #1

For Your Calendar

Term 1: Thursday 28th Jan – Wednesday 6th April

'On the Grow' kitchen garden workshop- Thursday 11th February 9am

Parent craft group- Friday mornings 9.30am

Parent evening- Wednesday 24th February

Lou Harvey-Zahra workshop- Sunday 28th February from 10:30am

News from James

Truth, beauty and goodness

Lately, the staff and I have been reflecting and reading about the importance of beauty in all our lives. In the case of children, it is particularly important that they experience beauty in the world and know it as a good place. This is the foundation for them leading purposeful and fulfilling lives. In the primary school years the focus is on beauty and goodness and as they become older, young people become truth seekers. Rudolf Steiner, along with many other educators from as far back as the ancient Greeks to the modern day thinkers, saw these three lofty ideals as being very important to education.

As a staff we will be focussing on creating a beautiful and good place at Aurora this year and we would like the whole community to help make the lives of children in our community beautiful and good. This can be through improving the physical surroundings and artistic work at home and school as well as the way we speak and act with each other.

We are very fortunate to live in a beautiful place and the school setting is particularly special. We would like to work with these strengths and continue to work on improving.

Off to a good start...

2016 has started quite smoothly. Aurora has grown with several new students in Kindergarten. Over the holidays there has been a lot of action to prepare for the year. You may have noticed the new office space and improvements to the workshop space. Many thanks to Rick Stanton for his building work. Thanks also to Phil Blair who helped prepare the grounds and the outside of buildings for the first day back.

Thank you to all the staff have been working hard attending courses, setting up rooms and preparing lessons to make the students' start to the school year as smooth as possible. We now have four classes in the school, Playgroup with Jenny, Kindergarten with Annabel, Class 1/2 with Kate and the Middle Primary Class with Jeddah. Playgroup will be meeting on Wednesday mornings in the Middle Primary room. While Playgroup is on, Jeddah will take her class to the library, workshop or outside under the tree!

After school activities

The school is now offering after school activities. This has started on a small scale on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3pm-6pm. Terence will be looking after the students on these days and other staff will be filling in when he can't make it. The cost will be \$20 per afternoon for regular bookings and \$25 for casuals. We are looking at establishing a fully fledged Out of School Hours Care Centre in the near future offering Monday-Friday care in mornings from 7am-9am and in the afternoons from 3pm-6pm. This will eventually be offered to students outside of our school as well as our own. There will be a different activity focus each afternoon with an emphasis on fun, play, practical skills and artistic activity. Please contact the school office if you are interested.

Parent evening – Wednesday 24th February

We have set the date for our first parent evening but would like parents to give us feedback as to whether it should be 5.30pm-7.30pm OR 7pm-9pm. Please let the office know so that we can have as many parents, grandparents and guardians there as possible.

More details about the format of the meeting will be sent in the next week.

Filming

Over the next few weeks, Nigel Christensen (Sophie's father) will be filming staff and students as he will be putting together short films for the website about each section of the school. Please let Mel or me know if you do not wish your child to be filmed.

Reminders

- Hats – broad brimmed hats are to be worn by all students for outdoor activities.
- Clothing- please ensure that your child wears colourful, sensible clothing without obvious brand names, marketing or messages. Brand names no larger than a business card.
- Raincoats and gum boots- we play and work outside in all weather. Please ensure that your child is prepared.
- The school day begins at 8:55am- it is important to remain punctual as it establishes rhythm for the children and also is a sign of respect for the teachers and the school program.
- Finishing time for the school day is 2.55pm. Please ensure that your child is picked up before 3.15pm as children will join the after school care group at this time and rates will apply.

Thank you to all the parents for the role you have played in making for such a smooth start to the year. On behalf of the staff I would like to extend our appreciation for the home environment and support created by parents at Aurora.

Yours with heart,
James

Playgroup

Playgroup started off with an almost capacity class on a day of lovely weather. It was a rich and social event hopefully enjoyed by all.

Craft Mornings with Jenny

A reminder that there is a regular Friday morning parent Craft group meeting from 9.30am to 11.30/12. There we learn Steiner soft toy techniques such as doll-making, felting and small gift ideas! All are welcome.

From the Kindergarten

For the first time this year, we have a half-half ratio of younger and older children in the Aurora Kindergarten, with the younger part-time children aged 3-4, and the older full-time group aged 5 turning 6 this year. At this early stage I can say that it's a mix that's rich, rewarding, and destined for success!

Here are a few examples of the ways that already we are differentiating the learning content to meet the children's individual needs, and provide them with the challenge that's appropriate to their developmental stage. Our goal at Aurora is to cultivate a love of life and learning, and prepare the children well for their next developmental steps.

When it comes to general domestic tasks and contributing to the running of the school, the younger children tend to follow the lead of the older ones and imitate them. Older children are given more responsibility- for example they may run errands to relay information and follow directions, be asked to complete fairly complex tasks like setting up for lunch, or to lead the way on our nature walk and help everyone to stay together! These all involve sequencing, memory skills and a range of language and social skills.

In activities like gardening, cooking and constructing, the older children are provided with challenging real-world applications of skills such as counting, measuring, estimating and problem solving.

Through play and artistic activities, older children often explore categories, sequencing, narrative structures, and a range of early literacy and numeracy skills.

A particular joy has been seeing the way these children are caring for one another already! The sense of having 'little children' as part of the group creates a family-like atmosphere and a healthy will to help out and set a good example, not only on the part of the older children but of the whole group.

Having parent helpers around is adding another dimension of harmony and a beautiful mood of appreciation. I know how the adults are appreciating having such a window onto Kindergarten life and the many priceless moments each day holds- and we certainly appreciate your practical contribution and care!! The children get to see so many people helping to look after our school, and already are imitating that. Many thanks, and we're off to a wonderful start!

Annabel Brown

New Beginnings - Class 1/2

What a lovely smooth transition we have had into the school year.

Class 1/ 2 has very quickly become an integrated group, with the Class 2 students happily re engaging with the rhythm of the primary school and the Class 1 students eagerly crossing the threshold into a new and more organised group learning experience.

We began the term with form drawing, which led into our literacy main lesson.

Form drawing has been described as 'sensitively felt, balanced movement' which uses the straight and curved line as its mode of expression, the line being the 'visible trace' of this movement. As such form drawing actively works on the child's sense of touch, life, movement, balance, and sight.

At this stage in their development the primary student learns through their feelings, they live into their imagination and with this understanding the lesson material is presented through stories and pictorial imagery. The class one children are being introduced to the upper case consonants. The consonants are imbedded in the drawing which follows the story.

The class two children are additionally writing a text describing the pictorial image from the story. They are building a bank of sight words/high frequency words. They are working on phonic patterns or word families drawn from the texts.

We began the term with a story involving the adventures of a family on a quest. The family has a helper and guide who knows many stories relating to the animals and experiences they encounter on the way. It is in this way the fairy tales are presented.

The language of the fairy tale really resonates with the children and lives in them. The following day when the children retell the story they are practically able to tell it word for word!

On the importance of fairy tales Rudolf Steiner wrote:

“Because fairy tales belong to our innermost feeling and emotional life and to everything connected with it, they are, of all forms of literature the most appropriate for children's hearts and minds ... human nature in the child is linked to the life of the earth world in such a primary way that children must have fairy tales as soul nourishment.”

from - The Poetry of Fairy Tales

Kate Koch

From the Middle Primary

Middle Primary's Wednesday Outdoor Class

What a beautiful sunny start for our outdoor classroom program. Fine weather and a tree for the walls and roof of our classroom had everyone in fine spirits with a healthy work attitude. All it takes is a couple of mats, our benches and our books and we have a completely moveable classroom. The workshop was used to do our Main Lesson painting and the class really need to be congratulated for working harmoniously as a team. Well done Middle Primary! I'm sure the Wednesday outdoor classroom will become a cherished component of the school year.

Primary Library Classes

Thank you to Rachel for stocking our library with such a great range of thoughtful books that cater for all interests and reading abilities. All Primary classes will have a library session on a Thursday and need to bring a library bag for returning and borrowing. Parents should have a peep in sometime to see the quality selection that Aurora is really proud of. For a small school the library is quite amazing!

Clothing Middle Primary

Just a reminder that students need a raincoat and gumboots every day at school. A spare set of clothes is helpful as well. We want to encourage the students to enjoy the great outdoors in all kinds of weather. Middle Primary students need to dress appropriately for working outside on a Wednesday. Warm clothes, hats and sturdy shoes are a must. Big thank you to the Middle Primary class for bringing and wearing their own hats EVERY day this term.

Crunch and Sip

This term I would like to trial a 'crunch and sip' program in the Middle Primary during the Main Lesson session. At around 10am students will be invited to bring a vegetable or fruit snack and their water bottle to their desk to snack on while they are working. And since they will be working it is important that the snack is not too sticky or juicy. Cut up carrots, capsicum, cucumbers, apples or grapes etc would be fine. I'm hoping that this will keep the energy flowing nicely during our Main Lesson and prevent starvation :-). After a trial period of 2-3 weeks I'll let you know in the next newsletter if this will be an ongoing program.

Thursday Lunches Middle Primary

This term the Middle Primary class is intending to cook their own lunch EVERY Thursday. So no need to pack lunches on a Thursday as we will be

cooking delicious food with gluten free and dairy free options. Morning Tea and 'crunch and sip' will still need to be packed on a Thursday. Any parents that would like to help with this are welcome to come along on a Thursday between 12.15 and 1. Since our class is so small it will be best if we can limit any parent helpers to one per session as we want the students to be doing most of the cooking! Parent helpers are invited to join us for lunch as well. Let me know by Thursday mornings if you are intending to come so I know to expect you.

Jeddah Teasdale



Introducing Terence Corbett

My wife and I moved to the Southern Highlands in 1986 for me to begin teaching in the Bowral Rudolf Steiner School. I taught there as a class teacher till 2005. When the school closed I had a break from teaching, working as a handyman/gardener at Pepper's Manor House in Sutton Forest for 3 years. I then worked as a casual and temporary teacher in local primary schools for 3 years before being called upon to teach at Orana Steiner School in Canberra for 3 years. I came back to do casual teaching in the Highlands for a year and then last year worked as a temporary teacher at Berrima Public School.

I am very happy to be back teaching in a Steiner school again and Aurora is feeling well established considering its young age. Each time I return to a Steiner school after teaching in mainstream it's like coming home again after having been in a foreign land where I was struggling with the language.

It's good to be home again!

Terence Corbett

German with Ben

Sehr geehrte Eltern und Schulgemeinde,

You may have heard a few strange words in your household these first few weeks, perhaps accompanied with new melodies or hand gestures. Do not be alarmed - the children are simply immersing themselves in the learning of German at school!

From a warm greeting of "Guten Tag" to lively song, dance and games, we are certainly having lots of fun with this rich and wonderful language. Immersion is the approach best suited to these children, as they get a deep feel for the language through imitation and its many pictures and gestures (just how they learnt English!). We may say they embody language and its movement, rather than freeze and intellectualise it.

Here is a run-down of how we are immersing ourselves in the German language, Wednesdays and Thursdays, in each class:

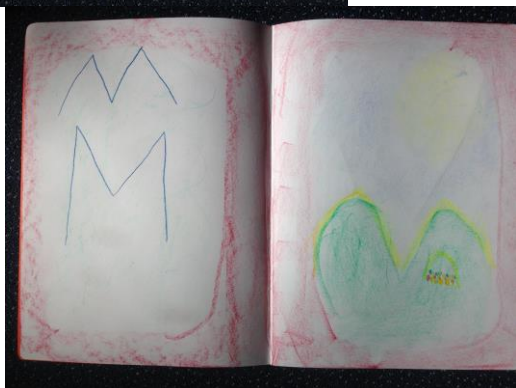
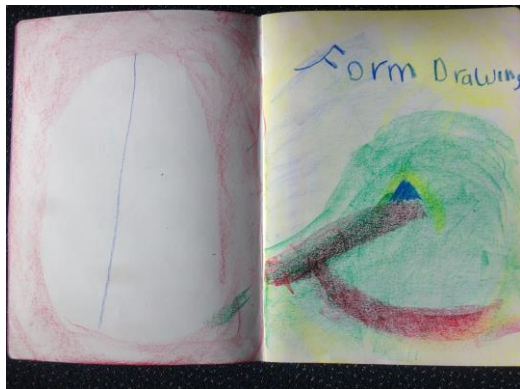
- In Kindergarten (ah, a German word!), we begin with a German Circle of greetings, singing and a special game of 'Ringlein, Ringlein', before we then wash our hands, set the table and share a delicious lunch together; as much as possible in German.
- The 1/2 Class has, again through German verse, song and games, been learning numbers, body parts and colours. We also play a game of hiding a 'Scharl' so each child can ask and answer a question of possession: "Hast du den Scharl?" - "Ja" or "Nein".
- We have begun Class 3/4 with a wonderful game of Farbenecken, involving choosing one of the four coloured corners of the room. We are also learning the First Roundelay of Bothmer Gymnastics, themed on building a 'house' together communally.

I leave you with a fun task to do in the meantime, namely to see if you can find any commonly used words or things in your daily life which are of German origin (a dictionary may help the parents). 'Kindergarten' can be our first discovery!

Alles Gute!

Ben

Student Work Gallery – featuring Class 1/2



Upcoming Workshops and Courses

Creative Discipline Workshop Transforming Tears Tantrums and Troubles while Staying Close to your Children

Sunday 28th February, 12.30pm to 4pm at Aurora Steiner School

As parents we sometimes question how to find effective ways to manage children's behaviour. How to discipline without using punishments and rewards? How can we set limits while maintaining closeness and trust?

Lou Harvey-Zahra's method, Creative Discipline, helps to solve challenges and trying moments whilst fostering positive life skills and connections. Offering numerous real-life examples and answers to commonly asked questions, this is an inspiring workshop from the author of the best-selling *Happy Child, Happy Home* (Floris Books). Not to be missed!

Lou Harvey-Zahra's new book *Creative Discipline, Connected Family: Transforming Tears, Tantrums and Troubles while Staying Close to Children* (Floris Books) is out now, available from Steiner-inspired stores, the school bookshop and Lou's website www.skiptomylouparenting.com

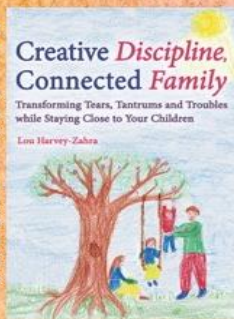
Fee: \$50 individuals & \$85 couples

Bookings: lou@skiptomylouparenting.com or 0425 780 681 or payment to the school office.

Feedback: "Lou Harvey-Zahra's workshops and books offer simple and practical tools you can put into practice the next day and see the results. I did!" (Maxime Urquhart, parent)

"Thanks so much for the great workshop yesterday Lou. I have had a wonderful day today with our two boys implementing the fresh ideas. Thank you again for sharing your wisdom and kindness in such a humble and easy to understand manner." (Stef Mustac, parent)

"I recommend Lou's books and workshops to parents, to hold children for their greatest good and to understand children's needs." Mara Lupieri (Steiner-Waldorf Early Years teacher)





Understanding Temperaments **with popular Steiner author Lou Harvey-Zahra** *Know the child, see the child, and hear the child*

Date: Sunday 28th February

Time: 10.30am to 12pm

Cost: \$15 each or \$20 couple

Venue: Aurora Steiner School

Come along and be inspired!

We will begin by understanding the four temperament types to gain personal insight and growing awareness towards partners, children, and work associates (all relationships). We discuss stages of life; parenting styles; and understanding children (to hear the child, see the child and know the child). Temperaments and Creative Discipline will be shared to end. Knowledge leads to greater self-awareness, clarity and harmonious relationships.

This is a unique opportunity to hear parenting author Lou Harvey-Zahra speak on this interesting topic.

This talk suits parents with children of all ages, and teachers and carers.

Parent feedback: 'Today I am more relaxed around my son, and I am able to steer my parenting in the right direction so we are more in harmony with each other. Becoming more aware of my son's temperament, and my own too has freed me up to totally accept every part of his being, even the difficult parts - and now I feel I have more skills to bring out the best in him.'

Lou Harvey-Zahra is a mother, Rudolf Steiner teacher and parenting author. She presents talks across Australia and UK. Lou's book *Happy Child, Happy Home* has become a bestseller and her new book *Creative Discipline, Connected Family: Transforming Tears, Tantrums and Troubles while Staying Close to Your Children* (Floris Books) will be available at the event \$30 or from any online book site or Steiner-inspired store. See Lou's website www.skiptomylouparenting.com



SYDNEY Rudolf Steiner COLLEGE
Teacher Training & Adult Education

A short course in Anthroposophy for parents and teachers wishing to understand what lies behind the Steiner/Waldorf school curriculum.

This course, over two weekends, explores Rudolf Steiner's understanding of the human being, called "Anthroposophy."

It explores Steiner's ideas of the human capacities of thinking, feeling, willing as they are expressed through body, soul and spirit. We will explore how anthroposophy has shaped other major initiatives such as education, biodynamic agriculture, medicine, the arts, and architecture.

During this short course you will learn about Rudolf Steiner and the times in which he lived. You will gain a greater understanding of the development of anthroposophy. This course is ideal for anyone who is seeking an introduction to the life and work of one of the inspirational thinkers of the 20th century.

Tutor: Lisa Devine

Dates: February 20/21 and March 12/13

Venue: Sydney Rudolf Steiner College, 307 Sussex St, Sydney.

Times: 9.30am - 3.30pm Sat, 9.30am - 1pm Sun.

Fees: \$230 each weekend

To enrol:

Visit our website: www.sydneyrudolfsteinercollege.com

Go to Enrolments/Arts and Knowledge courses/ AN2016

Anthroposophy: an introduction with Lisa Devine.

Fill in the fields and pay by Direct Deposit or Cheque.

Enquiries: (02) 9261 4001, admin@sydneyrudolfsteinercollege.com