

# "The Elder Street Herald"

October/November Edition 2007

In this edition we will be talking about:

**\*SCHOOL PREPARATION PROGRAM \*TOILET TRAINING \*GRASS AND TREES - HOORAY!  
\*INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRAINEE \*STAFF UPDATE \*SCHOOL PHOTOS \*FAMILY XMAS  
CELEBRATION \*PRESCHOOL GRADUATION \*GOOD FOR KIDS - GOOD FOR LIFE \*LATEST  
EDITIONS \*BIRTHDAYS \*ANANSE STORY'S - AFRICAN MUSIC AND STORYTELLING**

Welcome to the second last newsletter for 2007. It almost seems impossible to be true that there are only 7 more weeks until the end of our Elder Street year. What is even scarier is the thought of all the things to do between now and then! On the upside, it is lovely to reflect on the achievements and developmental of all the wonderful children at the centre over this year and the strong partnerships that have been forged between the centre staff and families. Hope you enjoy our latest news....

## **SCHOOL PREPARATION PROGRAM**

Our 8 week School Preparation program kicked off last week for the Wallaby children that are leaving to attend Early Starters or Primary School in 2008. These children spend some time each day together as a small group chatting about their ideas of big school, sharing news of orientation days, working on their developing social, emotional and cognitive skills that will help them be that little bit more prepared and comfortable on their first few weeks at school. If parents have any questions about this program, please do not hesitate to speak to Kim, Sheree or Shelly.



## **GRASS & TREES!!!!**

Way back in February this year we surveyed our families to see what improvements they would like to see happen at the centre. We had a lot of feedback about making our outdoor environments greener and more natural. We also received some suggestions to introduce



the children to the hands on experience of growing fruit and vegetables. This feedback coincided very well with our own staff ideas of how we could create a playground that was homier, greener, shadier and more hands on for the children. After the big job of installing new shade sails, we have now finally created a little green corner with some grass, two weeping mulberry trees some stepping stones that lead to our new and very popular play platform. We are also continuing on with our veggie, herb and flower areas. The children absolutely love the new areas, they have tasted every thing, helped plant, water, weed and just generally check on how things are growing in our backyard. We chose weeping Mulberry trees (which are slightly different from

the ones we have memories of climbing as children), these trees were recommended as they offer lovely shade, grow very well in lawn, are deciduous and hardy, do not offer any climbing options and bear wonderful fruit that the children can safely eat. For the few worriers who have been suggesting that their children will be coming home permanently purple, we do not envisage this will be the case as the trees cannot be climbed on and the staff will always offer opportunities to pick and taste the fruit under supervision. It would be pretty sad if we decided never to allow our children the opportunity to experience what we probably all did during our childhood just to save a bit of washing. If parents have any concerns about Mulberry stains please come and see me and I am more than happy to supply free Napisan if needed!!! In the meantime we really hope you enjoy our much greener backyard and thanks to the parents who have been so appreciative and positive about our new back yard venture. April and myself will be attending a "Children in Nature" seminar at New England University in Armidale next weekend and will hopefully come back with more ideas and knowledge on how we can further enrich the children's learning experience through natural environments.

### INTRODUCING OUR NEW TRAINEE FOR 2008



We would like to formally introduce Mitchell McPherson (or big Mitch as the children call him) to all the families at Elder Street. As mentioned in quite a few of the newsletters throughout the year, we have trialed quite a few young people for this position and Mitch was successful in gaining the traineeship for 2008. Mitch will officially begin as our trainee in January 2008 in the Joey room and in the meantime has been working as a casual whenever needed.

Most of the Joey families are quite familiar with Mitch now and all the children of the centre have built great friendships with him. We are often asked by the older children "is big Mitch coming in today?" As much as there are many documented benefits and some of our staff's own personal positive experiences of working with males in a predominantly female industry, we would also like to mention that Mitch was successful in gaining the traineeship on his own merits not just because he is male. He displayed a positive attitude, willingness to take instruction, learn and attempt any task and displayed wonderful interaction skills with the children, staff and parents. We wish him all the best and hope he feels welcome and supported in his learning journey over the next 12 months and beyond.

### STAFF UPDATE AND STAFFING FOR 2008

It seems like we have an update every month this year! Our latest news to share is that Georgia (last working in the Possum babies) has decided to extend her original 6 month maternity leave to the full 12 months. This means that the plan of her returning to work in January for 2 days in the Preschool room will be postponed until July 2008. The good news is that Donna (currently covering Georgia's maternity leave) has agreed to stay on until Georgia returns. This leads us to the final staffing roster for 2008 (up to July);

**POSSUM BABIES:** Sheree (M,T,W,F) Karen (T,W,Th,F) Kate (M,Th)

**JOEY TODDLERS:** April (M,T,W,Th) Kate (T,F) Mitchell (M,W,Th,F)

**WALLABY PRESCHOOL:** Kim (M,T,W) Shelly (M,T,Th,F) Nikki (W). Donna (Th,F)

**Food Manager:** Catherine (M-F)

Nikki will also work each Tuesday to cover team leaders' programming time. I will continue to work in the office Tuesday to Friday (8.30 - 5.00) and cover holidays and sick leave in the rooms when necessary. Any questions regarding staffing, please come and see myself or Kim for a chat.

**SCHOOL PHOTOS:** Shayne from Little Images attended the centre on Monday 29th of October to capture some lovely smiles from the children. The morning ran as smoothly as most photo days for under 5's - absolute crazed bedlam! I would like to pass on my thanks to the parents, grandparents and children who came in especially to have their photos taken and waited patiently for their turn and then even more patiently while we madly created the impossible - a group photo of the entire centre - children and staff. Shayne advised that the photos can be expected back at the most in 4 weeks.



## **FAMILY XMAS CELEBRATION**

**When:** Friday 23 November 2007

**Where:** Elder Street Backyard playground

**Time:** 4.00pm -6.00pm

**What to bring:** Chair or blanket

**Please see information on the last page of this newsletter for further details and attendance slip for the afternoon**

## **PRESCHOOL GRADUATION**

During our Family Xmas Celebration, we also have our Preschool Graduation. The children that are leaving to attend Early Starters or Primary school are presented to the centre community and receive a Graduation Certificate. Parents of these children will have received a specific invitation that outlined details of what time the children will need to be at the centre to be involved in the ceremony. It is a lovely event and great afternoon all round.

## **GOOD FOR KIDS - GOOD FOR LIFE**

On Saturday 27 October I attended a seminar presented by Hunter New England Area Health Service and the Department of Community Services promoting their Good for Kids, Good for Life nutrition campaign. Our licensing regulations state that each service open for longer than 8 hours per day (that's us!) need to provide 50% of each child's recommended dietary intake (RDI). We do this by planning menus around the guidelines given to us by these authorities. These information sessions are being run and resources supplied to ensure that each service is up to date with information on nutrition for children and to support best practice in children's services. It was a very interesting day which involved lots of hands on education on checking of nutrition panels on different products, checking that serves per day of all food groups were being adhered to and learning about what types of food products are actually considered a serve within the food groups. Overall our centre scored very well on our menu assessment, but the following changes will be made:



- **Sausages will be removed from the menu** - the guidelines do not consider sausages as a meat serve (FYI: none of the following products meet the criteria: commercially processed meats like hamburger patties, devon, salami, bacon, crumbed meats, cabanossi, pastrami, frankfurts). We will continue to provide good quality mince to meet red meat serves.
- **Ice Cream and Frozen Yoghurt will be removed from the menu** - again these do not meet the nutritional standards of a dairy serve (FYI: either do dairy desserts (yogo), cream, sour cream or flavoured milk). We will continue to provide milk, cheese, custard and yogurt to meet our dairy serves. We will also be introducing reduced fat milk and dairy products for the children in the Joey and Wallaby (children 2 years and over) as per instructions in the guidelines.

There are a few other products that we won't be purchasing any more due to their high sodium (salt) content, for example Jatz, but we will be sourcing other products of the same nature that meet the nutrition guidelines. I am working on setting up a display in the foyer area of some of the

great resources that this campaign has provided for us and parents. I would encourage everyone to take the time to have a look. You may be surprised about what is actually recommended for children's nutrition and also maybe learn some ideas of dealing with fussy eating and other food related issues.

### **ANANSE'S STORIES - Sam Derchie**

On **Monday 12 November at 10.00am** we will be having another performer from the Young Australia Workshop attend the centre. Sam Derchie will be using the tradition of the talking drum and other percussive instruments to explore the exploits of "Ananse", the folkloric spider character of the Ashanti forests of Ghana. Children who attend on a Monday will be charged the standard \$6.50 to their account. All others are welcome to attend the event as long as a parent or carer comes along with them for the duration of the show.

### **TOILET TRAINING - tips and procedures**

Warm weather season can also mean toilet training season!! Here are a few helpful reminders about the process of toilet training for our wee ones and how to ensure we can support partnerships between home and the centre and therefore foster success!

- Toilet training is not a test of parent's skill or a child's intelligence, rather just a small part of normal development that will happen with a little help.
- Most children become trained between 18 mths and 3.5 yrs, some in a matter of days, others in an on again off again sort of way which takes a year or more.
- Variations in age depend not only on the ability to recognise the sensations that warn of impending wee or poo, but also on willingness to participate in the process.
- It is common for some children to ask for a nappy to do a poo in rather than sit on the toilet/potty. If constant pressure is put on a toddler about this issue, it is likely that they will hold onto the poo and become very constipated. When they are ready, they will change from the nappy to the toilet/potty.

(The Mighty Toddler: R. Barker)

#### **AT THE CENTRE:**

- ♥ It is very important that parents and staff work together during this time with communication the key to success.
- ♥ We are prepared for and have no problem with accidents occurring. We only ask that a parent communicate with us if they have decided not to train at home, as doing it only at the centre and not at home tends to not work well at all.
- ♥ Lots of undies and changes of clothes are great and remember to give the washing machine a good maintenance service and purchase a soaking bucket for those more messy bags of fun sent home.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAYS!**



#### *October*

- |                   |                    |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| * Xavier turned 1 | * Cameron turned 1 | * Isobel turned 3  |
| * Gerry turned 4  | * Isaac turned 4   | * Jaide turned 4   |
|                   | * Josh turned 5    | * Jasmine turned 5 |



#### *November*

- |                  |                     |                  |                  |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| * Lili turns 2   | * Charlotte turns 3 | * Jemima turns 3 |                  |
| * Emily turns 4  | * Harriet turns 4   | * Billy turns 4  | * Bailey turns 5 |
| * Alissa turns 5 | * Lucas turns 5     | * Ruby turns 5   |                  |



## Latest Editions...

More beautiful babies, how exciting....

Welcome to Charlotte Therese, a gorgeous daughter for Elaine and Paul and little sister for Gerry (Wallabies)

Congratulations to Michelle and Bob on the arrival of their first little boy Tiernan, a little brother for Shona (Joeys)

Well done to Lisa and Greg on the arrival of their lovely little girl Miley a little sister for Egan (Wallabies)

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# Elder Street Christmas Celebration



**Date: Friday, 23 November 2007**

**Time: 4.00pm – 6.00pm**

**Venue: The Centre Playground**

**To bring: Blanket/Rug or fold out chairs**

The families of Elder Street Early Childhood Centre are cordially invited to our Christmas Celebration. We have a wonderful afternoon of activities planned, including:

- Face Painting
- Sausage Sizzle BBQ
- Santa visit and present for each enrolled child at the centre
- Preschool Graduation Ceremony

If you have a sibling attending the party who does not attend the centre and you would like them to receive a present from Santa too, please provide a gift wrapped book with their name clearly marked on it and hand it to staff by November 16, 2007.

So the afternoon runs smoothly please keep in mind the following points:

1. The bbq will be located in the car park. We ask that only adults go through the gate and that all parents remain aware of not allowing any children into the car park.
2. We ask that only immediate family attend the party due to space restrictions.
3. We also ask that once parents arrive at the celebration that they take responsibility for their child and sign them out on arrival. The staff will be very busy maintaining care of the children whose parents cannot attend the party.

Please complete the RSVP slip below and return it to the centre by November 19, 2007. We hope to see all our families for this wonderful celebration.

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### Elder Street Christmas Celebration

Yes, the ..... Family will be attending the Christmas Celebration on Friday 23 November, 2007 at 4.00pm

No of adults: .....

No of children: .....

Please place this slip in the fee box in the foyer of the centre by November 19, 2007.