

# Portobelo Avonhead Newsletter

## *What's been happening recently at Portobelo Avonhead?*

Welcome, to the Portobelo Newsletter...winter edition. Firstly, a big thank you to all the families and whānau for your incredible support during our rāhui (lockdown). It is great to see all the children back at Portobelo happy and sharing their adventures from the rāhui. Thank you for all your wonderful feedback about our Facebook music, art, and story sessions. The kaiako did such a great job posting their sessions online for the children to watch.

Since being back the preschool and nursery rooms have been a hive of activity with a variety of special celebrations. In May we celebrated Samoan language week with the preschool children learning about the Samoan culture, looking at traditional dress, and food, and engaging in a range of art experiences including making leis and Tapasa patterns.

All the children have been involved in New Zealand Volunteering Week. Thank you to all the families and whānau who gave us clothing and toys to donate to Plunket. The preschool children made some blueberry muffins and were given the opportunity to give them to someone of their choosing to brighten up their day. It was lovely to see their excited faces and discussions about who they were going to share their baking with and explain to their friends why that person was special to them. We also did a range of stories and mat times discussing as a group of how to be kind to one another. It was a great way to spread Manaakitanga which is one of Portobelo Avonhead's key values.

From Monday July 6th to Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of July, Audrey, one of our lovely nursery teachers, will be in the preschool on her last placement before graduating. Audrey has been a teacher for over twenty years and is amazing kaiako with heaps of knowledge and skills to share with the preschool team. Audrey will be in the preschool from 9.00am -3.00pm Monday to Friday. During this time Edwina will be working in the nursery room Monday to Friday 9.00am - 2.30pm. Edwina is a certified teacher, mum of two, and has many years' experience working with nursery, preschool and primary age children. Edwina is eager to show off her creative talents in the nursery. We wish the ladies all the best of luck for the month and hope they each enjoy their experiences in the new rooms. Please let Lana or Heather know if you have any queries.

Nga Mihi, Vanessa, Centre Leader



## News from the Nursery ...

As the rain clouds rolled over Christchurch who would have thought that we would be stuck inside? Not our nursery children! Our tamariki have been exploring new ways of interacting with our ever-changing weather systems. [Appropriately clothed 😊]. Puddles, ice, and wind have allowed us to embrace the brisk winter as it creates a new stomping ground, challenges for pulling spades out of our sand kitchen, and ways to swirl our bubbles up into the sky.

The cross-over from animals and into friendships within our group learning focus has seen many of our whānau bringing in their pets from home for us to learn a bit more about. We have experienced animals - from Clifford, the big fluffy dog, to Mushu, a blue tongued lizard! Scattered all over our classroom can be found photos of tamariki and their pets, supporting our welcoming home-like learning environment. This introduction to whānau pets had an exciting effect on our tamariki, they began exploring the new range of animals that entered to our learning environment with the cold weather. "Manu!" the children yell as they see birds flying overhead. A cricket found its way into our special bug house and quickly became a favourite of our tamariki as they explored the look of this new insect up close.

As our 'Animal' theme drew to a close, our tamariki made it truly clear what they wanted to explore next...friendships! Big hugs and high-fives are shared between tamariki each morning as they greet each other at the door. Mat times have become a time to sing alongside one another and many tamariki now pass rākau sticks to each of their friends, ensuring that each friend has one, the beautiful chorus of bumping sticks fills our hearts and classroom with the beautiful sound of friendship.



## News from the Preschool ...

A lot has happened in our wider worlds since our last newsletter! Since coming back to preschool after our 'Home Holidays', reconnecting has been extremely important to both our kaiako and tamariki, as we relearn our preschool pace and enjoy the quality time we get to spend together. During level three, our wonderful 'bubble' took the opportunity to explore and enjoy our natural world through daily walks to the local fields and challenged our creativity as without the playground as a resource, our tamariki's 'play equipment' involved rakau (trees), leaves, sticks and the wide amount of space they had to run and enjoy their natural world.

Kaiako have carefully observed and witnessed emerging play in action and have recognised our tamariki's curiosity in the 'World Around Us'. This has meant different things for many of our tamariki as our children have pondered questions about our bodies and what they are made of, where we are from, our identity and the other places in the world. Enquiry is therefore a huge focus in our classroom at the moment as our tamariki have opportunities to create their own hypothesis, enjoy the process of questioning rather than finding an immediate answer, and facilitating a sense of Ako (teaching and learning from one another) as our children all have different levels of knowledge, ideas and ways of thinking.

Commencing our 'normal' daily routine means that our 'Club 4' is under way again, with an emerging focus in constructing. Through an open discussion between kaiako and tamariki, our children have set their own intentions for their learning for the next few weeks, as they have asked to learn about excavating, tools, how to be safe on a building site, and how to build a house. Kaiako have recognised that our wider whanau have a lot of valuable knowledge to contribute to this learning focus, and we are excited to see our whanau's contributions to this focus.

Whanau, we are so happy to have our Portobelo community back together, kaiako and tamariki are ready to make some more learning magic!



# **Welcome and Farewells**

Welcome to the Nursery: Ava, Max, Lexie

Welcome to the Preschool: Basti, Chase, Starr, Aiyana, Eva, and Leon D

Farewell to our Preschool Graduates: Benji, Laura, Leon, Ellie, Chauncey, Ivy, Katherine, and Jacob. You all take our best Portobelo wishes with you to school, the next exciting step in your learning journey.

## **Upcoming events/parent and Whānau Notices:**

### **Upcoming events 2020**

#### **Portobelo Preschool and Nursery Matariki Celebration**

***Matariki is the Māori name for a cluster of stars which is visible in our night sky at a specific time of the year. In June/July, Matariki will re-appear in the dawn sky – signalling the start of the Māori New Year***

***Date: Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> of July***

***Time: 5.00-6.30***

***Please come and join us in celebrating our Matariki evening, we will be having a range of activities through out the night disco, stories and legends and fire staff dancing. The children will be making vegetable soup and bread to share with their whanau. Can you please bring along a plate of food to share.***

***We look forward to seeing you all there!***

### **Booking Changes**

***The 'Change of enrolled hours' form is now on our website [www.bestpreschools.co.nz](http://www.bestpreschools.co.nz). If you need to change your child's booking, you can download the form, complete it and scan it through to Vanessa (Centre Leader) at [avonheadportobelo@xtra.co.nz](mailto:avonheadportobelo@xtra.co.nz). Please remember that requests must be made at least a week in advance, so we can change our rostered staffing to ensure we meet legal requirements.***

### ***Vacancies***

We have vacancies in the preschool and nursery room available now. Having an extra day is great for you to have some much needed you time or get those jobs done that you never quite get around to. We have a range of sessions to suit your family needs.

Please Let Vanessa know if you would like to take advantage of this unique time.

### ***Contacting us...***

Just a reminder of our Nursery and Preschool cell phone numbers, so that you can text us to let us know if your child is going to be absent for the day, if you want to check on how your child's day is going, or for any other non-urgent messages. Our Nursery number is **027 361 8181** and the Preschool number is **027 455 6990**. We also update our Facebook page regularly with photos of our children's learning, so you can keep other family members 'in the loop'. This is where we post up to date information about the centre in the event of an emergency, so 'like' us on FB now!

## **From the Directors – Lyn and Ian**



Hello Portobelo families.

We are enormously proud to have a community of teachers and families who are so committed to the learning, happiness and wellbeing of our precious tamariki.

The Education Review Office visited us at the end of January, and say:

“Children follow their interests in a child-initiated programme. They experience extended periods of uninterrupted play. Teachers focus on the individual needs of the child. They respond well to children's interests and strengths and effectively identify how they can support and extend their learning through the programme.”

“There is a strong focus on developing learning partnerships with whānau and teachers highly value whānau aspirations for their child's learning.”

“Children under two years benefit from responsive teachers who know them well. They experience a calm environment and unhurried routines to meet their specific learning and developmental needs. This supports a sense of belonging and wellbeing. Children are viewed as confident, capable learners. They have choice from a wide range of learning experiences, including sensory play.”

Click on the link below to read the full report. Well done everyone!!

<https://www.ero.govt.nz/review-reports/portobelo-avonhead-10-06-2020/>

Thanks also to those who have responded to our Parent survey – we need to know what we do well, and what we can improve, to continue to thrive and survive.

## ***A note from Fleur Milne Professional Leader...***

A very warm welcome and happy winter to you all. I hope you are enjoying getting back to somewhat normal life.

During lockdown our Kaiako engaged in multiple Professional Learning and Development sessions via webinar. One of these was focused on using rituals to make the everyday extraordinary for children. Here at Portobelo we believe that every moment has the potential to be a learning moment, whether we are feeding an infant in our Nursery and modelling gentleness and a dyadic relationship, or if we are sitting with our preschool tamariki at a table during lunch modelling how we can turn take during a conversation so everyone gets heard. We strive for everything we do to be done with intention and at a pace that is led by the child.

Engaging with this webinar during lockdown caused me to reflect on my own life and my family in regard to rituals and the pace I/we live our lives at. I don't know about you, but I found such beauty in the space that lockdown provided to slow down and enjoy the moment. Instead of sculling down my morning coffee in the car on the way to work, my morning coffee became a ritual that included steamed milk and a good book. As a family we set the table with candles and flowers three times a day and had slow meals that we prepared together, instead of hitting that five o'clock rush where we just have to get everyone fed. Where we would usually drive to the beach we walked because there was nowhere else to be. We found the beauty and connection in the journey and the process, instead of always focusing on what was coming next.

While I am incredibly excited to be returning to 'the new normal', there is so much I do not want to leave behind from lockdown. I want to ensure I have space for quietness and slowness, for ritual, now that the busy is beginning to encroach again.

Our Kaiako have reflected this too. The Kaiako who were in the centre during Level 3 expressed that they have become even more responsive to children's rhythms as children created new rhythms during lockdown. This carried on as we began welcoming more children back to Portobelo and continues to be an area of reflection.

Many thanks Fleur

