



# Newsletter

March 2016

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A warm welcome to the New Year! Our beautiful children have been so busy playing, learning, and enjoying the warm weather that the last few months have given us. The teachers are looking forward to what this new term is going to bring!

## \* Greetings & Welcoming \*

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new children and their families that have joined our Bright Star whānau. We also farewell India and Lachlan who have left for school, and Macrae who will be leaving this month too.

## \*Over 2's Programme — The Animal Kingdom\*

The New Year has brought a new interest for the children: animals and their habitats. Many children came back from their holidays exploring all different areas of NZ. This resulted in a lot of conversations between the children and with our kaiako about animals and their place in our world. From this, the children have continued to make animal masks and engage in their socio-dramatic play. Others **have been pretending to care for their "pets", and some children**

have been requesting the teachers to set the tables with the miniature animals. Asking the teachers to read animal stories with them is also a very regular occurrence, and these are just some of their daily activities.



As a team, we reviewed the values of implementing a program based on animals:

*Social & Emotional Skills (Aroha, Mauri):* Research shows that tamariki who are supported in their love for animals tend to generalize that same love to other living things, such as plants and nature.

Research also shows that when tamariki are encouraged to care for animals, they tend to be more sensitive and caring towards other people as well.

*Looking after our living world (Kaitiakitanga):* Means providing tamariki with opportunities to connect with animals and nature, and encouraging them to look after the habitat (environment) that the animals live in.

*Imagination and Creativity:* When tamariki engage in socio-dramatic play or art activities around animals, their imagination and creativity skills are being extended and promoted even further.

*Fostering curiosity and investigation:* By encouraging tamariki to observe, think, and talk about a whole new world of wonder, this can lead to further exploration and building of new knowledge.

*Literacy development:* By providing tamariki with books and songs surrounding animals, we build on their vocabulary and language skills, and this is especially done when we introduce Māori legends involving animals. Here, we are able **to foster our tamariki's knowledge** about their whakapapa.



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As a result of this, the kaiako have set up various activities to enable the children to expand their knowledge on animals in regards to all curriculum areas. This also led us to plan our trip to the Wellington Zoo on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February.



**This helped to extend all the children's interest in animals, and everyone had a great time.** We started off in the nocturnal house where we saw the kiwis, and ended our trip with the lions that were unfortunately a bit shy. Our Zoo trip enabled us to explore animals that were from the jungle, forest, desert, water, and also those that reside in Aotearoa, simply as farm animals or domestic animals for example. On returning from the Zoo, the children have been talking about what they saw, and their play has been based on this topic of the Animal Kingdom. The kaiako are looking forward to **extending and expanding the children's knowledge on animals in the next few weeks.** Please feel free to contribute any ideas or provide **activities that you feel will help extend our children's learning and interests.**

### \* Painting our Whare \*

We worked together to make our Bright Star whare look beautiful. After the Christmas holidays, Andrew surprised us with an amazing whare in our outdoor play area. Linda invited Samin and Reina (Masyn's dad) to paint some Māori symbols on the whare.



The children enjoyed watching them paint the whare, and sang many Māori waiata to entertain and support the artists. The artwork made the whare look so wonderful. It was a community based effort which involved whānau, kaiako, and our tamariki,

which reflects the Māori tikanga value of whanaungatanga. The children really enjoy playing in our lovely whare.

### \* Happy Lunar New Year \*

Happy Lunar New Year! 新年快乐!!

새해 복 많이 받으세요!



The first 15 days of January on the lunar calendar are the Chinese and Korean New Year festivals. In their respective countries, this is the most important day for them during the year. Traditionally, many people who live or work in distant places will go all the way back to their hometown to get together with their families to celebrate the new year. It is similar to the Christmas celebrations here in NZ.



At Bright Star, many of our children and teachers are from different cultural backgrounds, so we are able to encourage our children to explore and share different cultural celebrations together.



The children made an awesome paper dragon, helped to cook delicious dumplings, and were told stories about Chinese new year. They also sang songs in celebration. We also asked and encouraged our parents

to share their traditional celebrations and resources with us, as it helps children to grow confidence and strength within their own cultures.



### \* Pukeko Group \*



Wow! What a great start to 2016 we have had. We would like to welcome the children and their whānau who have joined us this year. The good weather has meant that we have been able to spend a lot of time outside exploring. The children have been enjoying lots of water play, digging in the sandpit, and learning about how to care for our environment.

We have also noticed our children showing an interest in the different traffic passing by, and the use of our trolleys and toys with wheels. After observing these activities and interests, our programme will now be focused



on wheels and motion. To extend and support their interest, we will incorporate songs, art, dramatic play, and real life experiences related to wheels and motion in their different activities.



If you have an activity or an interesting story about wheels and motion, please feel free to share this with us. We have already had **one of our parents (Reina, Kaedyn's dad)** arrange for a digger to come to Bright Star, so our children were able to explore it up close. Thank you Reina, the children enjoyed this experience and have gained more knowledge about diggers.

### \* Storypark \*

It has been such a fun experience using Storypark and learning about **it. The teachers really enjoy putting your child's monthly learning story** on there, and we realise that we are able to put up a lot more photos or anecdotes as we are saving time on printing and formatting. We ask all our parents to kindly add comments, and use Storypark as a means of communication and planning, as we believe that it will have a really positive outcome in terms of increased communication and links between the home and centre. Thank you to all the parents who continue to do this.

### \* Self-review \*

Our first self-**review on "authentic interactions"** has begun, and our very reflective teachers have already started to see the different aspects and impacts of having authentic interactions with our tamariki. Please do feel free to come and suggest or inquire about our self-reviews. We will continue to send you emails about the results of all our self-reviews.

### \* Upcoming parent teacher meetings\*

**This month, your child's key teacher will be talking to you about arranging a time to discuss your child's individual learning journey. This is an important time for teachers and parents, as it gives us all a little uninterrupted time to ensure that your child's learning, developmental and cultural needs are met and extended. Please let your child's key teacher know if you need more than the allocated 15 minutes.**

### \* Let's learn waiata together\*

One of the tikanga Māori values and practices that our centre has been incorporating daily is the value of atuaanga. We say our karakia for the kai on the table as a way of paying respect and blessings for the food we eat.

#### Karakia mo te kai

Blessing for food

Whakapainga

Whakapainga ēnei kai.

Hei oranga

Hei oranga mō ō mātou tinana

Amine (pakipaki)

Amine (pakipaki)