



Newsletter

July 2017

July 2017! Over half the year has passed and we have been busy playing, learning, and enjoying the cold weather that the last few months have given us. Even though we have had some very cold and wet days, we have still made the most of our unpredictable weather!

Greetings & Welcoming

Welcome! Nau mai! We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new children and their whānau who have joined our Bright Star whānau. In our under 2's room, we welcome Archie, Peter, Dominic, and Skyler. In our over 2's room we welcome Cullyn, Hunter, Omkar, Mia, Tia, and Alysso. We also say poroporoakia (farewell) to Alex and Alice who have left for school, and Amber, Ryan, Nathan and Tyler, who will be leaving this month too.

Matariki Celebration

This past month our programme has revolved around celebrating Māori New Year - Matariki. Our teaching team have been implementing activities crossing different curriculum areas for the children to explore Māori culture. Here are just a few snapshots of what we have been learning.

As part of the programme, our kaiako and tamariki have been learning the Māori game- "Te Rakau" (stick game) together. As the waiata (song) is being chanted, the children click the rakau together, tap them on the floor, or click the rakau with their partners. This activity does not only bring entertainment, it also brings the feeling of kotahitanga (togetherness) to amongst the tamariki. Our tamariki have experienced making poi, porotiti (a type of Māori musical instrument) and ākahu (cloaks). Through these activities, the children explored Māori visual and performing arts.



The children's learning has been extended to the wider community as well. Our trip to Te Papa provided our tamariki an opportunity to appreciate Māori architectural art. We visited the three types of whare (houses), wharepuni (sleeping house), wharenuī (big house), and pataka (store house for preserving food). We learnt about the functions of different houses, and their purposeful design. When we came back to Bright Star, our tamariki recreated 3-D models of these houses



with cardboard materials and launched an exhibition for our parents and families to share our learning.

Two of the big themes related to Matariki celebrations are hakari (celebratory feast) and whānau involvement (family). At Bright Star we enjoyed a beautiful celebration of Matariki as we gathered our tamariki, whānau, and friends to the centre. Our tamariki sang and welcomed Joe McLeod, master Māori chef into our centre to share a wonderful

feast with us. Joe talked us through the process of making the hangi kai which he explained to be traditionally wrapped in leaves. The woven baskets which contained the kai was then placed on hot stones. The food was then covered with a wet cloth to contain the heat and cook our delicious meat and vegetables. Joe then blessed our food and did a whakatauki. This was truly such a lovely moment for our tamariki and whānau to come together and be a part of something so unique in New Zealand through Māori culture.

Through the Matariki programme, the children learnt new things each and every day, especially more awareness of Māori as tangata whenua. This helped them to shed light on their own cultures, encouraging some of them to reflect on "where do I come from?".

** Up-coming programme ~ Weather and Seasons**

From the last Matariki programme, we learnt about how Matariki is also the season for sowing seeds and harvesting. We also learnt about the relationship between constellations and seasons through the Matariki stories. This has provided children with some knowledge about weather and seasons.

Recently, the storms and weather warnings in Wellington have provoked more discussion about seasons and weather amongst our children and teachers. One stormy day, we collected hail from outside and we investigated how hail forms and what hail is. On another occasion, we were simply amazed at the big pine tree swaying from the strong gusts of wind in the play ground, and we then talked about Tawhirimatea (guardian of wind according to Māori mythology).

This new found interest has been reflected in the children's self-initiated activities. We have observed some children drawing or painting the sun, clouds, rain, and rainbows. We have also observed children creating "stormy day" dramatic play. To extend children's interest and knowledge about weather and seasons, our teaching team will implement a programme surrounding this topic in the new term. If you have any good ideas or resources to contribute, you are more than welcome to bring them in.



Hiding in a tent and having hot Milo ~ Kaylee and Mila's stormy day solution.

* Pukeko Room *

It has been a busy few months, including a few visitors of the animal kind as part of the animals programme. We had a lovely pair of budgies come and amuse us with their talking and playfulness, thanks to Jane (Tyler's mum). There have also been fish, caterpillars, spiders (eek) and snails. We have all enjoyed exploring and learning all about animals and nature through exploring our outdoor area, songs, books and dramatic play. Now after some observations we are moving on with the children's current interest which is music and movement.



The budgies visited our Pukeko room.

The weather has been cold but with our new music and movement programme we have been keeping warm and active by dancing up a storm. During our dancing, we are observing a lot of expressive and creative dancing along with warm friendly social interactions. The children are enjoying a variety of music from traditional nursery rhymes to some fast paced Indian music. If you have any interesting music (or from another culture), we would love to have a copy to play for the children.

Our musical instruments are out regularly during the day and are filling the air with lots of wonderful sounds. Playing musical instruments encourages the use of fine and gross motor skills along with hand eye coordination. The other lovely sound that can be heard is our singing. Throughout the day when the bus goes by you can hear the words of the "wheels on the bus" being sung or maybe "pat a cake" when we are baking our sand cakes in the sandpit. Through the repetitiveness of songs the children are growing their vocabulary and comprehension and now are able to request and participate in their favourite songs even if only with a few key words and/or actions. Please feel free to ask for the words to songs if you don't know them and want to sing along with the children at home.



The children created lovely patterns on the paper while dancing to the music.

Internal Evaluation (Self-review)

These past few months the team have focussed on trying to find out how effective our communication is between staff, parents, and management. Thank you so much to all our parents who completed and returned the communication surveys. We love parent and whānau feedback and it greatly guides and improves our practice.

Overall, the results of our review showed us that parents are happy with the way in which we communicate with them, and also how often we communicate with them (both O2s and U2s rooms). The team have decided that we are going to continue to strive to have meaningful and regular conversations with all our families regarding their child's progress and learning.

We have also decided that we will start using a 'parent diary' to communicate. In the O2s room, this diary will be located near the kitchen bench, besides the fish bowl. Please feel free to write any notes in there such as if your child will be picked up early for an appointment, if they will be away on any particular day, if they have a school visit, and so on. The U2s room will also be following a similar process. Please do feel free to write in these parent diaries as it helps families and teachers ensure that all teachers have read your important message.

Our next self-review will revolve around the topic of investigating how effective we are at integrating and promoting multi-cultural knowledge and values in the day to day running of the centre.

Please feel free to come and talk to Melanie regarding our self-reviews. It would be great to get some feedback :)

** Reminders **

During these months of winter, the teachers have been having on-going discussions and doing activities with the children regarding hygiene topics. This is to encourage the children to wash their hands regularly and properly, along with how to blow their nose, catch their coughs, and so on. Please could you teach your child these basic hygiene practices also so that they can make links between their home and our centre. We also ask/request you to provide them with appropriate clothing such as socks, boots/proper shoes, winter hats, and warm jackets because we encourage the children to continue enjoying our outdoor area in the winter months, as fresh air and sunshine helps with maintaining good immunity. **Please continue naming your child's belongings to ensure they go back home.**

It would be much appreciated if your child **DOES NOT** bring toys from home to the centre. Sometimes teachers put these toys in the office or in the child's bag, however there is still a level of risk and hazards when bringing in toys from home. Please stop your child from bringing toys from home for the safety of all the other children, unless they contribute to their learning such as a storybook, a photo album, artefacts from what they did at home or on the weekend, etc.

** Matariki Waiata (song) **

Sing this Matariki waiata with your tamariki and learn the names of the seven Matariki stars.

Ngā Tamariki o Matariki

Waiti, Waitā, Waipunarangi,

Tupu-ā-nuku, Tupu-ā-rangi, Ururangi e

Koinei ngā tamariki o Matariki

(These are the children of Matariki)

Ngā whetū e pātaata i te rangi e

(The bright stars that shine in the sky)

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