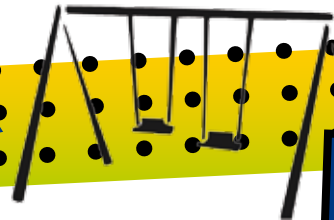




# playground



Dec 2007

The Illawarra Children's Services newsletter



*For the information of parents, carers and staff*

## Kiara takes Buddy Walk in her stride

Children and staff at Koonawarra Children's Centre participated in a mini Buddy Walk in October to raise awareness and funds for Down Syndrome.

"We did many laps around the premises, having a wonderful time," said Koonawarra director Karen Gottas.

Five year old Kiara Risku, who has Down Syndrome and has attended the Centre for three years, walked with her buddies on the day.



*Kiara Risku steps out with her mum Vanessa and brother Kye*

"The staff at Koonawarra Children's Centre have always helped Kiara, and have been a fantastic support to our family," said proud mum, Vanessa.



*Children from Port Kembla Preschool visit the residents at Mt Warrigal Nursing Home*

## Port Kembla preschoolers visit Mt Warrigal seniors

Children from Port Kembla Preschool visited Mt Warrigal Nursing Home to celebrate NSW Children's Week in October.

The children performed multicultural dances, showcased their artwork and presented small bunches of lavender as gifts to residents.

"The visit allowed the children to interact with the residents, creating a sense of belonging and community for young and old", said preschool director, Vesna Neloska.



## Staff Profile

Maria Hammond, Advanced Child Care Worker (Qualified) at Western Suburbs Child Care Centre

*How long have you been at the centre?*  
I've worked at Western Suburbs Child Care Centre for 20 years - first as cleaner, then as casual cook, then as a relief child care worker. I wanted to ensure quality care and make a difference. This inspired me to complete my Diploma in Early Childhood.

*What's the best thing about your job?*  
Working with babies - providing homelike warmth and a nurturing environment for children under three.

*Worst thing about the job?*  
Being regarded by some as a baby sitter, rather than a skilled educator.

*Your favourite film?*  
Gone with the Wind.

*If you weren't an early childhood educator, what would you be?*  
I'd be a neo-natal nurse.

*I'm passionate about...*  
Aesthetically beautiful environments and high quality care.

*Three words that describe me.*  
Child/family focused.



*Scholarship winner Rowena Garvey with CEO Bill Feld*



*Maria Hammond with Rachel at Western Suburbs Child Care Centre (above)*

Photo by Janine Kaye

Illawarra Children's Services would like to recognise more staff for their achievements.

Families can nominate a staff member to receive special recognition by sending the staff member's name, centre and the reason for their nomination by e-mail to the Manager, People and Performance at: [neil.arnold@ics.org.au](mailto:neil.arnold@ics.org.au).

## University scholar announced

Illawarra Children's Services presented a prestigious \$5 000 community scholarship in October to Rowena Garvey, a final year early education student at the University of Wollongong.

Rowena said the award was a great honour and would help her pursue her career in early childhood teaching.

CEO Bill Feld said that Illawarra Children's Services had awarded the scholarship to an outstanding achiever with a real passion for early childhood education.

"With early learning setting the tone for each child's success in life, talented early childhood teachers like Rowena are so very important", said Bill.

## Creative arts in focus

More than 500 children and families attended the November preview of *Fantastical Classical* at Anita's Theatre in Thirroul.

Arranged by Illawarra Children's Services as a thank you to local families, Wollongong Symphony Orchestra was in full force, supported by surprise child conductors, cannon fire and fireworks.

Meanwhile, almost 100 staff attended *The Music in You* - a three-hour musical experience for staff, presented in partnership with the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music. Delivered by early childhood music educators Janet Andrews, Suzanne Mieth and Julie Pinazza, the sessions explored music as a medium for early learning and recreation.

Shifting to another creative focus, easels and palettes ruled when 20 enthusiastic eight to twelve year olds attended master classes in painting in the October school holidays. The creative youngsters held spontaneous exhibitions before taking home their finished canvases.



*James taking part in a Masterclass run by artist and educator Jennine Primmer*

*"Creativity is life enhancing. There is hardly anything more satisfying than being creative, whatever the form. Being creative is self-defining, in that a creative act by definition has some quality of uniqueness and originality."*

- Curriculum Framework

## Junior art helps sick kids

Helensburgh Community Preschool held its third annual art exhibition and social evening in November to raise money for worthy causes.

Over several weeks leading up to the exhibition, the children worked on their individual masterpieces and large group paintings.

The exhibition was held at Helensburgh Community Centre, with families and friends purchasing beautiful, original works of art at silent auction on the night. More than \$1100 was raised for the Sydney Children's Hospital at Randwick.

## An arty 21st birthday for Kiama Downs

Children at Kiama Downs Children's Centre showed off their artistic talents in an art exhibition on October 30 to mark the centre's 21st birthday.

Director Kate McCallum said that the children were excited about showing their art to family and friends.

"The children produced a lot of art work and the idea of exhibiting their own work really spurred them on. We have always been a creative centre, but this recent inspiration is definitely catching, with many of our staff also attending additional creative arts training in recent months," said Kate.

The celebration was also an opportunity to thank all the families, friends, past and present staff, and the local community for supporting the centre over its 21 years.



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Submissions or suggestions  
for future issues of  
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and encouraged!

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*Shaun Timmins with children and  
staff from Balarang OSHC*



## Dads welcomed at Narellan

Narellan Early Learning Centre held a morning tea on August 31, with a special invitation to dads and grand-dads.

"We were excited to see so many fathers and grandfathers joining in. The children proudly introduced them to their friends and talked about it for days," said early childhood educator Joanne Lane.



*Families enjoying the Father's Day Morning Tea*

## Balarang brekky stop for footy legend Timmins

Balarang Outside School Hours Care director Nichole Tuckerman and children at the centre have developed a healthy breakfast menu as part of the Before School Care program.

"I was happily surprised when the children asked for healthy breakfasts. They are very aware of the importance of healthy eating and worked with me on the menu", said Nichole.

To celebrate these healthy choices, Dragons football legend Shaun Timmins joined the children and enthusiastic staff for a nutritional breakfast on September 4.

For more information on before and after school care enrolment visit [www.ics.org.au/oshc](http://www.ics.org.au/oshc).

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