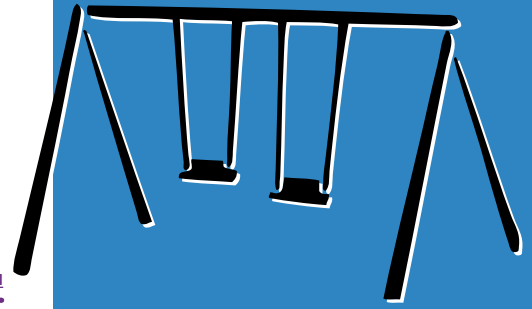


playground

June 2008

Visit our website at www.ics.org.au



Kids chill to Nan Tien vibe

On April 28, children at Corrimal Children's Centre centred their Chi with experts in the ancient practice of meditation.

A trio of monks from the Nan Tien Temple visited the centre to extend the toddlers' already keen interest in the relaxation techniques of Tai Chi.



Preschoolers Alysha Kain, Keira Smith and Charlotte Jones with Reverend Jueping

Service director Kobie Connor said, "The interest began with staff using relaxing music to calm the children after playing outdoors. When children began to retrieve pillows and ask for 'dolphin music', we explored it further through combining movements and breathing to the music".

The staff at Corrimal Children's Centre said the visit also prompted discussion about different religions and cultures.



Billy Backpack hits high note

Behind the scenes, Transition to School mascot Billy Backpack has been practising dance moves to a rhythm he can now call his own.

Billy's new hit, 'Hey Billy Backpack!' has been written and recorded by local band The Dogmatics (Paul McGee, John Littrich and Neil McCann), with backing vocals by Kiama school children (Patricia McGee, Kate and Dominic Littrich and Gabby McCann).

Transition to School Project Officer Kath Smith says the song will enhance interaction between children and Billy.

"Billy is a visual connection for children to the transition process and provides opportunities for positive connections to school and all that comes with it."

Billy's debut single will be launched on Sunday 19 October at the Wollongong Picnic in the Park. For more information or to download Billy's new song, visit the website at www.transitiontoschool.com.au.

From the CEO's desk..

Welcome to the June issue of Playground.

Illawarra Children's Services is governed by a Board of community volunteers who determine the organisation's mission and strategic direction.

Elected in May, the Board includes the following parents and experts in education, childcare, disability services, industrial relations, accounting, marketing and law:

- Jenny Dickson (President)
- Jenny Hopkins (Secretary)
- Steven Testa (Treasurer)
- Belinda Mellows (Asst. Treasurer)
- Prof. Paul Chandler
- Harold Cosier
- Penne Dawe
- Denise Fraser
- Melissa Humphreys
- Glenda Pearce
- Justine Poole
- John Williams

New board members are Melissa Humphreys (Barrister) and Prof. Paul Chandler (Dean of Education, University of Wollongong).

Board members work to ensure the best possible service for every child. For more information visit www.ics.org.au/about/board.html.

Bill Feld
CEO



**Illawarra
Children's Services**

Hair 'razing' event raises hope

On March 13, three volunteers from Central Office - Bill (CEO), Andrew (Information Technology Coordinator) and Neil (Manager, People and Performance) went under the razor to raise money for cancer treatment, support and research.

The support was phenomenal and together they raised over \$1,700 for the Leukaemia Foundation and Australians living with leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders.

Enthusiastic Wollongong City Preschool children and staff attended the event to support the volunteers and help keep them in good spirits.

Thank you to all families and staff who supported them. Their hair might be growing back, but they've made a lasting contribution.



Sarah from Wollongong City Preschool with coloured hair (top right) and before and after shots of Bill, Andrew and Neil.

Children run away to the circus!

Each school holiday period, Illawarra Children's Services runs a special interest workshop for children. Last school holidays it was a circus skills day for children ages 5-12 and the turn-out was phenomenal.



A tower of children at the school holiday circus workshop

The special workshop was organised by Illawarra Children's Services, in partnership with Circus Monoxide's Half High Circus. The clinics were run by qualified and experienced training instructors who had just as much fun as the children.

The sessions covered contemporary circus skills, including hula hooping, trapeze, juggling, acrobatics, tumbling, staff twirling, and clowning. Demand was high for places and further circus clinics are planned for July. Check our website for dates.



Staff profile - Belinda Iliffe

What is your role?

Advanced Child Care Worker Qualified at Bulli Children's Centre.

How long have you been at the centre?

Six years

What's the best thing about your job?

Spending time with beautiful, happy and smiling children everyday.

Worst thing about the job?

When children find a creepy crawly in the garden and they are so excited to show you, they hold it up really close to your face.

Your favourite film?

The Ring, The Others - anything scary.

If you weren't an Early Childhood educator, what would you be?

A baker that specialises in making sweet things like cupcakes.

I'm passionate about...

Bagging a bargain, chocolate and providing children with amazing environments to learn in.

Three words that describe me...

Bubbly, enthusiastic, fun!



Belinda Iliffe with children from Bulli Children's Centre

High achievers recognised

Belinda Iliffe (pictured centre with Bill Feld and Karen Tonge) was one of several staff recognised with special awards at the Annual General Meeting on May 7 for 'going above and beyond' in their service to children and families.

Other deserving award recipients on the night were Phil Anderson (Cobbler's Hill), Sue Flint (Wollongong City, Helensburgh and Central), Keith Drysdale (Wollongong East and Corrimal Special Needs), Melanie Rigby (Helensburgh), Kath Smith (Transition to School), Kelly Duah (Port Kembla) and the team at Warrawong Children's House.



Christmas hours

As a service to families, all long day care centres (ages 0-5 years) and school holiday centres (ages 5-12 years) will be open on Monday December 22 through to Thursday December 24.

Congratulations to our inclusion support team

The Commonwealth Government has announced that Illawarra Children's Services will manage and deliver the Inclusion Support Program for a further three years until 2012.

Assisting more than 360 child care services across the Illawarra and NSW South East regions, the program team helps local teachers and child care staff to ensure high quality, inclusive environments and programs for all children.

CEO Bill Feld said the announcement was a vote of confidence in the team's service to families across southern NSW, and particularly for families whose children have special needs.

Fundraiser par excellence!

The Illawarra Children's Services Golf Day Fundraiser was a huge success, thanks to the organisers Jim Primmer (grandfather of preschooler Violet at Western Suburbs Child Care Centre) and Grant Hughes (Shellharbour Workers Club).

A big thank you to the major sponsors - Ainsworth Games Technology, Aristocrat, IGT, Star Games, South Coast Gaming Machines (Konami) and Tricorp, as well as the many other businesses and individuals who registered teams, sponsored holes or contributed prizes, the parents and staff who assisted behind the scenes and on the day. Thanks also to our MC for the day, Ted Tobin.

Jim and Grant led a wonderful event that raised \$33,000 for community based children's services in the Illawarra. Service directors have their cheques and are already spending on creative arts resources, books, play equipment, excursions, invited performers, musical instruments and gardens.



Golfers Rod Young (Telstra Countrywide), Jason McCauley (BHP Billiton), Andrew Craig (ICS) and Phil Schafer (Illawarra Business Chamber) preparing to tee-off at The Grange



Aria at Wollongong City Preschool putts for gold (below)

Littlest golfers step forward

On Friday May 9, Wollongong City Preschool had a mini Golf Day to coincide with the Illawarra Children's Services Golf Fundraiser.

Children came to preschool dressed in their 'golf' clothes, ready to play some mini-golf with their friends at Kenny Street Children's Centre.

Thanks to the Jewell family, who donated passes to Tiger Putt Putt. Children were given a prize for the best dressed, most enthusiastic, most hole-in-ones, best shot, best team player and shortest golf game.

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Submissions or suggestions for future issues of Playground are welcome and encouraged!

Deadline for the September 2008 edition is August 8

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**Illawarra
Children's Services**