

THE KIDS COTTAGE TERM 3 NEWSLETTER

Term 3, 2019 | Issue 3 | Date: 5 August 2019



KEY DATES

29 July: Welcome Back Imogen from your overseas adventure!

7 Aug: Welcome Back Dan from your overseas tour with your band!

30 Aug: Spring Vacation Care programs available

2-6 Sept: National Child Protection Week

4 Sept: Educators' Appreciation Day & The Biting Truth Nutritionists visit ASC for Kids Club (Yrs 4-6)

Director's Message

As many of you are aware, Kids Cottage has had an ongoing after school care waitlist for the past couple of years. While Jacqui and I work very hard each year to provide after school care to everyone who needs it within our Middle Harbour community, there is still a need for improvements and the NSW government agrees.

The Department of Education wants to hear from parents about before and after school care arrangements that will support them most effectively.

Parents and carers with children attending government schools who need access to before and after school care and vacation care should complete the [Service NSW form](#). This includes parents who currently have access to care and require more or a different type of care. You can complete the form until December 2019.

The information we collect will be used to better understand what parents need and where. This information will be used to plan for and manage the availability of new and expanded services.

Alternatively contact the team directly at BASCreform@det.nsw.edu.au.

The new site will allow parents to tell us the areas of need but not book places. To access before and after school care, parents still need to contact the relevant service directly. Service information is available on the [Child Care Finder](#).

While the commitment for before and after school care aims to deliver places for all children attending public primary schools, we know that many services cater to children from a range of schools, both public and non-public. Parents of children attending non-government schools are also encouraged to let us know about their needs via the [Have Your Say web form](#).

Winter Appeal Wrap Up



Thank you to all our families for your support with our Winter Appeal for the homeless at Kids Cottage last term. It was a huge success. We received so many donations and were able to use gold coins from our movie sessions to purchase new socks, toothbrushes and underwear! It took our staff and children a solid amount of time to sort everything out before we provided it to Happy Helpers, a community run organisation that provided the donations to those doing it tough this winter in our local community.



As part of our Winter Appeal, we had a young girl come in and relate her experience with working with Happy Helpers. She had the children close their eyes and imagine their life without a home, without clothes and stressed the impact one person can have on a community. Her speech impressed many children to write cards and continue to help organise our winter appeal. The children also knit a few scarves for us to include in our donations and baked all the sweet treats that we sold at our movie sessions to raise monetary donations. It was great to see our whole community come together to help those who were doing it tough this winter.

Winter Vacation Care Highlights

What a full Winter Vacation Care we had at Kids Cottage in July! The children and staff had so much fun both in centre and on excursions. A few highlights were having our very own ducklings hatch and grow throughout the holidays, feasting at Teppanyaki and Crinti's, trying something new with ice skating and bubble soccer and making the most out of the sunny days at several of our great local parks and beaches!

Check out the wall in the back room at Kids Cottage to see pictures from throughout the July school holidays and make some suggestions about activities you'd like to see us include in our Spring Vacation Care or other future vacation care programs!



Jubilee Park in Mortdale is the 'coolest park' according to children in Years 3 & 4!

STAFFING SPOTLIGHT

Jacqui Merlo has worked at Kids Cottage since April 2014. Over the past five years, Jacqui has worked as a group leader for our Seniors and Kids Club before taking on the role as Assistant Director. Jacqui recently added Educational Leader to her title at Kids Cottage and we thought we'd let her share a little bit about this new role with you all.

How would you describe your role as the Educational Leader for the Centre?

"I oversee all aspects of the centre's program and ensure that it meets our learning framework, *My Time, Our Place*. I also work with training all staff on developmental needs of individual children and how we can maximize each child's opportunities for growth within our program."

What are a couple goals you have for The Kids Cottage before and after school care program as the Educational Leader?

"I hope to educate all staff, children and families more on our Centre's environmental sustainability philosophy as well as discover areas that we could improve our eco-friendly practices. I would also like to incorporate more activities that help our children build their resilience and general life skills."

Are there any ways the families can support you in your role as the Educational Leader?

"I would love for our families to have more input into our program and be able to provide more specific feedback on activities or areas of developmental focus they would like to see."

What is your favourite learning experience that we offer at Kids Cottage?

"My favourite learning experience to facilitate with the children is cooking. I feel that this is a life skill everyone should have, and I enjoy helping the children learn new skills and try new foods expanding their palettes. I love teaching children about healthy eating habits."

HAVE YOUR SAY

KIDS CORNER

Term 3 and Term 4 are always a little bittersweet at Kids Cottage as we start to say farewell to our Year Sixes. One of the aspects that we as Kids Cottage staff take a lot of pride in is our relationships with each individual child and for our Year Sixes that have been attending Kids Cottage since Kindy, we are excited for them as they take the first steps towards the big high school transition, but also sad to see them move on from Kids Cottage. This year we have had a fantastic group of Year Sixes who have been wonderful leaders and role models for the younger children. We interviewed three of our Year Sixes for some final thoughts before they say goodbye to Kids Cottage. Here is what they had to say:

What are your favourite things about Kids Cottage?

Emma: "I really like how all the staff are very nice and caring and really social with us, I also like the art incursions like our Paint and Sip that we did in July."

Evanya: "I like how the staff are really relaxed and the activities are very fun."

Hugo: "I like the food and the activities like Skater HQ and the excursions in holidays especially Wet'n'Wild."

Do you have any advice for current children at Kids Cottage that you want to pass along?

Emma: "Hang out with the staff because even though they're older than you they're really cool."

Evanya: "Give the activities a go even if you don't think you'll like them."

Hugo: "Eat all the food you can and play jokes on each other and the staff."

What is something that you learnt over the years at Kids Cottage?

Emma: "I learnt how to rollerblade with Skater HQ."

Evanya: "I learnt how to make sushi and I've made it since on my own!"

Hugo: "Kids Cottage gave me the courage to try every activity."

Do you have any final comments that you would like to share?

Emma: "Just thank you to all the staff for being so fun."

Evanya: "Thank you to all the staff for being there for us and having nice chats with us."

Hugo: "Thank you to the staff for caring for us especially when we're injured or sad. You always make us feel better."

ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

We have a couple environmental initiatives happening at Kids Cottage currently.

One of our Year Sixes, Aidan, has taken an interest in the 'War on Waste' and has decided to help do his part. You may have noticed the signs up in Kids Cottage about Project Battery. Aidan has left a container in the office for used/dead batteries. He is collecting these to recycle them as batteries cannot go in our regular waste bins. Feel free to bring in any dead batteries you have at home and drop them in the container. Thank you, Aidan, for this great initiative!

Also, as you can imagine we produce a large amount of soft plastic waste at Kids Cottage throughout the week. We have started collecting our soft plastics at Kids Cottage to recycle at Woolies or Coles and invite you to join us. Soft plastics include bread bags, foil wrappers from biscuit packages, cereal box liners, produce bags, etc. Thank you, Jacqui, for taking on this initiative for the centre!



SEEKING FEEDBACK

Thank you for your support of The Kids Cottage. We greatly enjoy having the opportunity to look after your children and highly value your feedback.

It would be much appreciated if you would please take a few minutes to answer our survey. It's completely anonymous and the more responses the better, so we are happy to have the feedback of more than one carer per family. Thank you!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/kidscottage2019>.

