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OUR NEW iMac!

Our brand new Apple Mac Desktop computer has arrived and Mr Glenn has put it into operation setting up our iPads ready for deployment. Our P&C has generously funded the computer which is over $1,800. Meanwhile, here’s Thomas using his iPad during morning greeting time in Miss Megan’s class! Next week all of our teachers will be attending an iPad training session to develop our skills in this area.

With a wide range of developmental levels and abilities in the class some children are at the beginning of acquiring skills for school, others are continuing to work on developing these skills or are building on previously acquired skills. These skills include learning how to function at school as independently as possible such as, following the class and school routines. Other skills include sitting at group time, listening, being ready for work and doing their best, looking after their belongings and doing things for themselves. The children have all shown excellent progress in these areas.

This week – Miss Louise’s Class

Our class of Ashley, Bridie, Ike, Damian, Addison and James have developed good friendships with wonderful interactions. Every morning there is great excitement as they all come together in the classroom.
The children have become so clever at reading and following the visual schedules they are often telling us what is coming up next which is very impressive! The children are constantly developing their communication skills as they are encouraged throughout each day to use their PECS symbols. They are doing so well with their PECS, Cathy and I are thrilled to be kept on our toes as the children are clearly letting us know their needs and wants, initiating lots of communication and becoming very busy, eager communicators which is very exciting to see.

Using the Australian Curriculum, units of work in the learning areas of English, Mathematics and Health and Physical Education have been developed specifically for the ability levels and interests of the children in this class. Literacy and Numeracy lessons throughout each week enable the children to move to the streamed group that best suits their abilities and stage of development for these lessons.

The unit of work for the learning area of English incorporates the literacy program that includes; developing phonic awareness, pre-writing and writing activities, pre-reading and reading activities, shared reading and guided reading. The genre focus for Semester 1 was labelling. During shared reading time, using large picture books with engaging stories, the children were learning to recognise and label characters or main features of the story. They have shown how clever they are by recognising and matching labels.

The children have thoroughly enjoyed developing their phonic awareness and word building with the fun and multi-sensory program, ‘Letterland’. The children have become highly engaged in these lessons as they learn the letter name, sound and formation. Phonic awareness is further developed each day with guided reading activities.

The unit of work for the learning area of Mathematics encompasses the numeracy program which last term focused on developing the skills of recognising, counting in sequence forwards and backwards, with one to one correspondence, numbers 0-5, 0-10 or 0-20 depending on the stage of each child’s skill development. The children had fun and worked hard at developing these counting skills with essential ‘hands on’ activities. They also took turns to come to the board to count with the ‘magic wand’ to sequence and count numbers as well as playing the missing number game and number ‘bingo’.

The unit of work for the learning area of Health and Physical Education engaged the children in activities to develop their abilities to follow actions and understand and follow the rules of a game.

**MAYOR’S MORNING TEA**

Our School Leaders for 2013 were recently announced. Cloe Hallett and Patrick (Paddy) Sullivan were unanimously selected for this senior role within our school for this year. One of their first duties was to represent Toowoomba West at the Mayor’s Morning Tea for School Leaders in the Regional Council Area. Cloe and Patrick behaved impeccably throughout this event and had their photo taken with Mayor Paul Antonio and Councillors.
Families and friends who shop at Woolworths, please remember us with your Earn & Learn stickers. Toowoomba West has boxes for your sticker sheets at most Woolworths stores in town. There is also a box for sticker sheets here in our foyer. If you would like more sheets (as sometimes Woolies runs out), please ask us and we will send sheets home. It would be a great help if you could stick your own stickers onto sheets for us.

Last year the Woolies Earn & Learn points raised from our families and friends enabled us to choose from a great array of wonderful resources from Modern Teaching Aids, to the value of more than $5,000 – a huge saving for our school budget and very much appreciated!

Last term we had students from three secondary schools visiting us on a regular basis: St Ursula’s College, Toowoomba Grammar School and Concordia College. This term we have groups from Grammar and Concordia continuing. Our students enjoy having the ‘big kids’ around and the secondary students and their supervising teacher tell me that they get so much out of their visits – it’s a ‘two way street’. Below, Year 11 Grammar students pose with Drake while he was waiting for his bus in the afternoon. Some of these lads will be attending the Sony Camp in September, as buddies for the young students with disabilities on that camp.

On Wednesday 24 April we held an ANZAC Ceremony in our hall. The ode was read by School Leader Cloe Hallett. In addition to having the national anthems of both Australia and New Zealand, talented senior student Campbell played his didgeridoo in honour of indigenous members of defence forces who have helped to defend Australia in all past wars.
DONATIONS

Before the Easter Break, a charitable organisation called the Royal Society of St George approached me to make a donation of books to the value of $50 in honour of ANZAC commemorations. Indeed this pledge was announced during the recent ANZAC Ceremony in Toowoomba. Our thanks go to President Bob Anderton and the Toowoomba Branch of the Society for donating some beautiful books which students from all areas of the school can enjoy. Bob came in recently to deliver “Everything You Need to Know about Snakes”, Big Book of Big Bugs” and “Spots Opposites”!

Earlier this week, Glenn Azar dropped into our front office and handed me a sum of cash; part of the monies raised from a recent ‘Fight Night’ promotion (with other money going to other charities). This donation to our school amounted to $1,122! Thanks so much to Glenn for making our school one of the beneficiaries of the fundraiser.

EDUCATION WEEK

Although last week was actually Education Week, we will be staging an Education Week event at another time in the near future. We hope to hold both our school Cross Country in conjunction with an Education Week display in our hall, on Wednesday 5 June, so keep an eye out for more information about that soon.

MAINTAINING OUR FACILITIES

Parents and Carers who have visited our school since the holidays will have noticed painting which was completed over the Easter break. G Block was painted inside and out. The interior of our Admin Block was painted as well as our Covered Play Area. These areas had not been painted since the 80’s so two fresh coats were really appreciated.

TOOWOOMBA WEST FLASH MOB!

On the last day of last term, we had the most fun a school could have – just ask any of the kids or staff! During the day, if dance music played over the PA system, students and staff were asked to drop what they were doing and make their way to the Covered Play Area for some frantic dancing – ‘flash mob style’! It was a fantastic way to end the term, especially as it was the last day for a number of our treasured staff members: Mr Ben (Tupas, on leave for a year), Miss Cheri (Ochnio, on leave for 15 months), Miss Dawn (Garrett, on leave for 6 months) and Miss Di (Nielsen, who retired)! Here’s the good news: we are having another Flash Mob Day next Wednesday, with free dress.
ILPs – INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLANS

Education Queensland’s revised *P-12 Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Framework* has recently mandated the development of an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for all students who are working on different year level curriculum in one or more Learning Areas OR for whom a highly individualised curriculum is required. Naturally, all of our students fall into this second category. At the moment there is not absolute clarity about the exact requirements of ILPs for our special school context and as a result, these were not developed in semester 1 of this year and, as we are still not sure about exactly what is required through the ILC process, ILCs will not be used in this school until next year. Please be assured that teachers are developing and working towards individualised goals for your children in each of their curriculum areas studied (which were negotiated with you during your first round of Parent-Teacher meetings last term). Thank you for your understanding, but in the meantime, please feel free to discuss any issues relating to these plans with your classroom teacher, Glenn or me.

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED

Each week eight students participate in horse riding with Riding for Disabled. Accompanied by school staff and RDA volunteers, students have short periods on the horses which are led around the course slowly. Teacher Michelle Troughton co-ordinates this program which is also supported by our Physiotherapist Lucy Fogarty through her visits to the program. Staff have seen some amazing progress in students in areas from postural changes to developing confidence and self-esteem through this program.

Discount Vouchers:

There are discount vouchers attached from various theme parks which are current until the end of June.

TEMPORARY TEACHER AIDE POSITION

Overleaf (p. 6 of this newsletter) is an Expression of Interest for a temporary Teacher Aide position within Cohort 1 at our school. Please direct any inquiries to Glenn or myself.

Till next time

Regards

Lea

P&C MEETING

Our next P&C Meeting will be held on Tuesday 28 May at 5.30pm. Everyone is welcome!

★★★★★ Coming Events ★★★★★

- 22.05.13 Flash Mob – Free Dress Day
- 28.05.13 P&C Meeting at 5.30pm
- 05.06.13 Cross Country / Education Week display
- 11-12.06.13 School Photos

REMINDERS

As winter is fast approaching, we are noticing that some students, in particular, have increasing appetites and in some cases are eating all food that is provided at morning tea. Please don’t be offended if you receive a note from your child’s teacher about this. We are only acting in the best interests of your child whom we think may still be hungry.

This is a reminder to emphasise the importance of checking your children’s nails and ensuring that they are kept at a short, smooth and manageable length.

We are also asking if you inspect your child’s hair regularly (every night if possible) in order to check for head lice. I know this can be difficult to defeat, but I always find great success with regular cheap conditioner which drowns the lice and makes the eggs (or nits) easier to remove with the fine comb. Following up every few days with more conditioner and the lice comb is important as well.