A Word From Ellon ...

Spring is here...........

It was very interesting this year. Spring seemed to arrive about 3 weeks early. Children were very aware but it took some time for us teachers to catch up. In fact, we had many conversations as to what was happening. The mood had changed - the children were energetic and wanting to fly, and they were sometimes emotional and finding it hard to settle into the daily mood and routines.

It was an interesting observation to see how we adults can become so bound to the calendar. As it was not yet the 1st September, (the first day of Spring on the calendar) we adults were not ready to go out and meet the forces of spring. However eventually the penny dropped for us, and we adjusted the program accordingly. We provided a longer time outside to meet the enthusiasm of our little people, the winter table disappeared, and together we started making our blossom balls ready for the festival.

The children’s play again adjusted and we could feel the ‘breathing’ of our day become more rhythmical and calm. Once again we were reminded of what a privilege it is to be able to work with the seasons, to experience how our natural world asks us to respond to these magnificent seasonal rhythms, and observe how in tune our children are to the changing forces. All this is so easily lost in our 21st century world and I feel blessed that I have been able to add this dimension to my journey as an educator.

The magic doesn’t stop. The day before the Spring festival, one of the boys came up to me with a basket of special treasures he had collected from the garden.

There was a leaf, a seed, a little stone (or maybe a crystal) and some little seed pods. He was so proud of what he had found, and guess where he found them all? On the ground in the garden. Not one did he pick from a plant or tree.

It was such an affirmation of the journey the staff had taken in preparing the puppet show for the festival. The evening before the festival we were all laughing and working together and we were delighted with the simple but beautiful puppet show we had created. It was an appropriate story for the children at this moment.

Enjoy the holidays from all the Periwinkle staff.

Warmest Regards

Spring is in the Air
Spring is in the air,
Tra la la la, tra la la la
Flowers everywhere,
Tra la la la, tra la la la
Butterflies are fluttering,
Little birds are singing.
Spring is in the air,
Tra la la la, tra la la la.

2012 Term Dates
Term 4: 8 October – 14 December

All of nature begins to whisper its secrets to us through its sounds.
Sounds that were previously incomprehensible to our soul
now become the meaningful language of nature.
Rudolf Steiner.
Thank you to all parents who contributed to the Spring Fair Silk Ribbon Stall preparation and assisting on Saturday.  It was a beautiful day and so precious to see the smiles on the faces of the children making the ribbons and then flying them in the wind...what a lovely opportunity it was to come together as a community and create something so special.

Love to all, Jackie Smith- Stall Co-ordinator.

Teo Donaldson, from the Gold Coast, experiences the fun of a Cape Byron Spring Fair.

Periwinkle preschool older Saya, and her family, painting silk ribbons. (above)
Self-directed Play.
A Parent Education evening exploring the phenomena.
Tuesday 28th August, 2012

The Parent Evening began with Ellon sharing some of her wisdom, and her experience of play in the preschool. We learned that through play, children are “active participants” in their learning, yet you can’t awaken ‘active participation’. What teachers and adults can do is to create the ‘right environment’ for play to occur. This means surrounding the children with ‘real work’ such as cooking, gardening, cleaning, and creating, so that children have a ready resource of authentic life experiences on which to draw to transform in their play. We were then invited to spend about 20 minutes in authentic play ourselves, and as you can see from the pictures, what fun we had! How glorious it was to be given permission to step back into our imaginations- free of daily worries, or stresses- and play freely. Later, we reflected and shared our experiences, laughing a lot in the process. I think I speak on behalf of all the parents present when I say that on this night, we received a gift- a rare insight into our own development and that of our children, and a reminder of why we all choose to send our children to Periwinkle. Thank you, Ellon.
A sneak peek into a Periwinkle Working Bee.

Earlier this term, we held a working bee. More than 20 parents and a tribe of children turned up to help us beautify Periwinkle’s grounds by turning the soil, aerating the mulch, cleaning the shutters, polishing the outdoor curtains, and giving our front gardens a huge overhaul. Indoors, parents were busy preparing the silk ribbons for the Spring Fair, tidying the kitchen, and polishing the crayons (with children’s help). Many hands sure do make light work! We are so grateful for families who continue to give up their weekend time to care for our preschool space. Without your help, we just couldn’t do what we do. A big thank you to all from the Periwinkle team.
Celebrating the Seasons at Periwinkle:
Spring Festival, 2012
Waking up on a glorious Spring day, with not a cloud in the sky, we readied ourselves at home for the Periwinkle Spring Festival. And what a joyful experience it was to be.

Kellie, Bess, Carina, and Ellon prepared a puppet show for the children and families. It was about a young girl who loved the flowers of Springtime- to be mesmerised by their colours, to breathe in their exotic fragrances, and rejoice over their patterns and shapes. She loved to pick the flower buds and take them home, and play with them, throwing the petals up into the air. One day, she heard a whispering and she realised it was from a little bud, who kindly reminded her that when the flowers were picked, their colours fade and they could no longer dance in the garden, and no-one is able to enjoy the flowers anymore. So, the little girl had an idea. She decided to make her own flower blossom by tying a bunch of coloured wool strands together into a pompom. Then she took her flower into the garden and danced along too. (With thanks to Susan Perrow, who wrote this delightful story “The Little Girl who loved flowers”, taken from her Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviours book.) Our children had prepared their own spring blossom too. Children were then invited to make their own flower garland headband. When all the children were adorned with brightly coloured flower headpieces, the Periwinkle staff led everyone out for a dancing celebration, and invited parents and friends to join the children in playing the simple folk dances they had learned this term. Finally, a grand feast of Spring-inspired fare was served and we ate this to the sounds of laughter, and harmonious music provided by community members. What a celebration of life, love, and joy it was!
An interview with Periwinkle’s “Garden Angel” (or self proclaimed gnome!), Cyndi Harris.

As Periwinkle’s Garden Angel, you must have a passion for nature and gardening. Can you share a little bit of your background, how you came to Periwinkle Preschool, and what led you to take on this role?

I don’t see myself as a Garden Angel, but rather of a garden gnome. I adore being outdoors and scratching around in the earth – the smells, the insect life, worms and birds- its all right there in the garden. Before I had children, my husband and I had many years of wilderness travel and I felt very in touch with the natural world. Being a busy mom (mum) has changed this, and at this stage of life, I find working in a garden a good way to keep that connection alive. Also, the sense of wonder my children have for the earth comes alive in the garden as well. My husband Daniel has an extensive background in botany, gardening, and horticulture and I suppose I figured if I took on the role at Periwinkle, I could always rely on him to lend me a hand! I am learning about Australian plants and gardening as I go. I am very much a novice but very keen. Being from Colorado, I find this climate fascinating, almost overwhelming. Things just grow and grow and don’t stop!

Organising working bees can be time-consuming and we want to make sure that all members of the Periwinkle Community know about them. Where should parents look for information about upcoming events?

Working Bees are such an important part of maintaining Periwinkle, as we do not have a budget for a gardener or maintenance person. We rely on the parents, who come with all kinds of skills, to help out with this. But it’s also a great social opportunity for families to get to know each other. There is always an email reminder of an upcoming working bee, a message in the communication book as well as a big colourful sign on the gate. I try to make it really obvious.

If you had an endless supply of money, what would be your biggest dreams or projects for Periwinkle?

Well, I guess I could go big if the money is endless. It would be great to have a separate tool shed with lots of tools we use throughout the year- ladders, rakes, potting mix, whipper snipper, and things like that. We don’t mind bringing all the gear down, but it would be great to have gear already there. I would love also to have more edibles in the landscape; citrus, passionfruit, raspberries, rose apples, or Davidson plum. A herbal tea garden, a water feature, and a native bee (stingless) box would be a great addition too!

What three things would you rate as the most important areas needing attention at Periwinkle?

1. Getting the Biodynamic compost pile up and running again (stay tuned for an up-coming workshop).
2. Maintaining regular cleaning of gutters (this helps with mosquitoes.)
3. Everyday grooming. Weeding is a never ending task but if mums, dads, visitors or helpers take a minute to pull out any suspect garden invader, it would be such a help.

How can the Periwinkle Parent community help in practical ways?

Parents can always help out by picking up a broom and sweeping pavers, raking the grassy knoll, pulling up weeds when you see them, and during school holidays, especially over summer, coming in to water the gardens and pots.
Parents can also donate seedlings or join us for a working bee each term.

Can you remind us of how to contact you again please?

You can leave me a message in the communications book or call me on 040 714 8411.

What is your hope for the future of the garden and landscape at Periwinkle when you pass on the baton?

I see Periwinkle Preschool not as a service for my child but rather a gift to my family. We are so fortunate to have this magnitude of quality and care for our children in this community and I feel I have a responsibility to try to relieve some of the burdens of a very dedicated staff. Time is precious and having a young family makes for a busy life, but I feel confident that there will always be people who can and want to help keep Periwinkle beautiful not only on the inside but on the outside as well. I am always looking for ideas, suggestions or keen gardeners to help with maintenance. Special thanks to the many of you who have already done this!

The time has arrived! The kitchen is almost here.

While you are enjoying your holiday break, Periwinkle will be a hive of activity. Starting Wednesday, the current kitchen will be removed to make way for the new purpose-built kitchen to be installed. Chris Greene (Ned’s dad) has volunteered to assist Ian in the installation and will lay the tiles for the splashback and art area. We would like to give thanks to Glen and Cathy of Wilson’s Ceramics in Byron Bay, who kindly donated the ceramic tiles for this project.

The installation will occur in the second week of the holidays. It is a major job, requiring the assistance of an electrician to rewire the space and a plumber to ensure the water services remain intact.

The staff visited Ian’s workshop a few weeks ago to view the kitchen and were overwhelmed by the beauty and craftsmanship of Ian and Rudi’s work, and so pleased with the overall look and feel of the kitchen and the use of materials. Periwinkle staff can’t wait for the holidays to be over so they can start using the kitchen to prepare the daily meals. (Although of course, they will relish these two weeks to relax and rejuvenate in preparation for Term 4!)

Everyone involved with Periwinkle would love to thank Ian, Rudi and Jen for their glorious contribution to the future of Periwinkle. Ian’s and Rudi’s workmanship has to be seen to be believed and it has been a real honour to have them both involved in this project from start to finish. Thank you will never be enough.
An interview with Therese Steele, author of the book, “The Art of Nourishing”.

1. What were the steps that led you to this journey of writing your own 'nourishing foods' cookbook?

The journey to good health in our family began when our son Sam had some health difficulties early in life. My husband and I embraced a whole food lifestyle and made it a natural part of our family life to help with the situation. Once Sam was well, family and friends and random strangers began to ask for my recipes, and for help, and I spent lots of time emailing people, writing down tips, and generally passing on information to anyone who asked. Around this time, I also began to volunteer in many local school tuckshops, and in school camps, helping to clean up their menus and provide some real food options. My younger son and his friends also played cricket and were expected to refuel with white finger buns, frozen hotdogs, and pies. I thought that these young sportspeople might also benefit from a clean diet to help them succeed and so began a food revolution here too. One experience really stood out for me, and that was working in a local high school canteen. I prepared real food for the menu, and served children straight from the pot, as I believe that children need to see how real food is prepared, and be lovingly served. I also displayed the ingredients of what was in the food, including herbs and vegetables. I met a Year 10 boy who had never seen a potato! He was from a well-to-do family, but his busy full-time working parents did not cook at home. He was fascinated watching me turn raw ingredients into real food. All of these experiences, plus the fact that many of these children repeatedly requested my recipes for home, confirmed my belief that collating all this information and writing a book was a worthwhile journey.

2. What have been some of the biggest benefits for you and your family of embracing a lifestyle of wholesome, nourishing foods?

My whole family is now healthier and fitter than ever before. My engineer husband has completely changed his thinking, becoming locally and globally aware of the connections between environment, community, and health. This colours his decision making processes on big projects for a positive outcome for us all. And finally, both my boys continue to educate their peers on healthy living by how they live. Their friends now often comment on how the boys have been a role model for good health and now the friends are taking notice and making changes in their lives too.

3. If you had three pieces of advice or wisdom you could share with Periwinkle families, what would they be?

- The easiest way to living a whole food life is being prepared.
- Double your quantities when cooking and freeze half for another night.
- Create a weekly cooking routine so you know what you need to prepare in the shortest time possible- be efficient.

4. How much is it, and where can Periwinkle families buy your book?

The full-colour book with over 170 real food recipes costs $60 and can be purchased through my website, www.artofnourishing.com. Ellon has kindly asked me to share some recipes and real food cooking tips at a Parent Evening later in the year, so I’m hoping to also visit you at Periwinkle soon, books in tow. I look forward to meeting you then. Therese xxx
BRAZIL NUT LENTIL & BROWN RICE SALAD

This salad is amazing all on its own or can be used as a delicious stuffing

1½ cups cooked organic brown lentils or 400g can organic brown lentils, drained
1 small red onion, finely chopped
½ cup chopped brazil nuts
2 cups cooked brown rice
½ cup chopped raisins
½ cup chopped parsley
½ chopped mint
2cm piece of ginger, peeled and grated

Dressing:
juice and finely grated rind of
1 lemon
¼ cup tamari
¼ cup olive oil or mustard seed oil
1 tablespoon maple syrup

Combine first eight ingredients in a bowl. Combine dressing ingredients in a screw-top jar. Shake and mix through salad. Serve cold.

Thank you to Therese for kindly sharing this recipe with Periwinkle families.
Periwinkle Fundraiser
“Ebay Garage Sale”
We are currently seeking donations of goods from Periwinkle families for the ebay garage sale.

If you have any goods that you think would be suitable, we would love to hear from you. We are particularly interested in good quality clothing bundles, baby carriers, cots, baby equipment, timber toys, car seats your children may have outgrown, or other good quality items that you think might be helpful to our fundraising efforts.

A quick email (or phone call) to Jen listing your goods by the end of the holidays will help us gauge whether or not to proceed with this endeavour. Jen Henderson on jenhender@hotmail.com or 0413 057 600.

Depending on the notifications we are given, It may be that we alter our plans and instead of an ebay auction proceed with a stall at the Lennox Babies and Children’s market in November.

We hope that this Spring holiday mood will encourage you to sort through the cupboards to find your unwanted items and look forward to hearing from you soon.
Amber, on behalf of the PCM.

Wishing our Families a wonderful and safe Spring holiday.

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Editor: Amber Greene

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