

Piwakawaka Community News

Autumn 2010



Autumn Equinox

Poututerangi, Te Ngahuru, Seed Time and Harvest

Halfway between the Summer and Winter Solstices, the Autumn Equinox is the time of harvest, in both Maori and European traditions. For Maori, it was time to lift the first crop of Kumara, thanking Pani-tinaku, the goddess of kumara, and to celebrate the abundance of the harvest.

There is a sense of calm around autumn equinox as the fine weather lingers on with seductive steadiness, making winter seem far and distant. Yet shadows are beginning to lengthen and sunbeams slant under verandahs, shafting in under low windows. It is full harvest time, the time of plenty, when rituals of celebration take place. We bring in the fruits of the harvest, we feast, play games and sing. We might gather around the first fire, turn out the lights and listen to stories of journeys into darkness. As we listen we contemplate the parallels with what is happening in nature, how the balance of light and dark tips at the equinox and we now enter the dying phase of the year. It is an opportunity to reflect on the mysteries of life and death.

This is when we make the transition from outer to inner, from above to below, from light into dark. Turning within gives us the opportunity to contemplate our own inner harvest to see how it contains the seed of whatever new crop is to come in spring. This is when we draw faith and prepare ourselves. Have we replenished ourselves and harvested from life during the growing season of the year? It is a good time to share a symbol of our inner resources with others. By celebrating the equinox harvest in this way, we honour our inner riches and let go of the work cycle that preceded the journey.

Our own Equinox celebration mirrored this process; by sharing our own hopes and dreams for our community, we plant seeds for our future which can be nourished by all. By acknowledging those who have helped us this far, we lay to rest what needs to fall away. I felt enriched and thankful to be part of this community and the season we are now in.

Easter is joined to the Autumn Equinox - it is the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Equinox. How do we make the message of Easter relevant to us in an Autumn environment? The wreath we made at the equinox gathering celebrates the nature of the season with golden leaves, berries and flowers. We can use it as a centrepiece for our Easter table. The Monarch butterfly is a wonderful symbol of new life which we can see at this time. For the past few years I have made a Golden soup for Easter lunch. It is made with the fruits of the harvest - pumpkin and kumara and brings the colours of the season into our celebration.

Happy harvesting!

*The never ending seasons
That so lightly come and go
Are miracles of wisdom
No man can ever know*

J F Wornal

Inspired by *Celebrating the Southern Seasons* by Juliet Batten and *Easter in Autumn* by Colette Leenman

Playgroup News

Playgroup has got off to a good start this year, with a consistent group of about 6 families coming each week. Welcome to Janey, Daniel and Brendan, who have recently moved to our area and to Kelly and Silva Seven.

Thank yous. Thanks to Janey for helping with the recent ministry funding round. Thank you to Jane for your efforts in helping carry the playgroup and doing a lovely story this term, beginning the study group and organising the Equinox celebrations! Thank you Fabienne for providing leadership for the playgroup.

Our **Easter celebration** will be held this coming **Monday, March 29th**. All family and friends are welcome!

Please bring a beautiful plate of finger-food and enough dyed and boiled Easter-eggs for your family for an Easter egg hunt.

Playgroup will break for the school holidays and begin again on Monday 18th April.

Craft Group

Late last year, the craft group was hard at work making dolls and Christmas decorations for a stall at the Christmas Craft Market. Their hard work paid off and they made \$500 for the trust.

Special thanks especially to Alice for organising the stall and decorating it beautifully!

The craft group met on Friday to make wreaths for our Equinox celebration. The next meeting will be on Friday 30th April. Fiona is also keen to teach bead making. Call Alice on 405 9382 if you are interested.

Poipoi Home Child Care

Alison Thom began Poipoi Home Child Care network late last year. Alison is interested in offering a warm and welcoming environment for children, that is healthy and natural and allows them the best possible chance to explore, play and learn. Emma and Jeanine are both Homebased carers for Poipoi. If you are interested in Home based Care for your child, call Alison on 0800 764543.

Storytelling

Would you like to learn how to tell a puppet story, and gain a deeper understanding of this art? Ingrid Wubben is now available to share her knowledge, experience and resources with small groups for a series of 2 hour workshops. Call Ingrid on 021 or email mibiznizz@gmail.com



Baby / Coffee Group

For expectant mums & mums with bubs

Are you interested in:

Holistic,
Natural, or
Steiner inspired parenting?

Group meets every fortnight -
Dads & older siblings welcome!

Please phone or email Olivia on
09 401 9915 / nedandliv@gmail.com



Study Group

Meets every Monday from 12.15 - 1.30.

The study group is studying Rudolf Steiner's 'The Education of the Child'. There have been some interesting discussions related to the text about how the environment and parenting influences the physical forming of the organs in the young child. People who attend are pleased to see that the benefits of studying the theory helps with the practical tasks of parenting. If you would like to join, talk to Jane.

Health Corner



Colds and flu are common at this time of year, when the seasons are changing and the weather is cooling down. To help our children - and ourselves - to cope well at this time, here are some treatments I have found useful.

- Allow children to convalesce! Simple to say but often we neglect this important point! Illness is often our bodies way of telling us to slow down. Additionally, keeping children at home helps reduce the spread of germs to others. Although it is no fun for a child to be sick, I often find we all enjoy the change of pace and the chance to pamper the one who is feeling poorly with various treatments.
- Encourage and help your child to blow their nose. Children sometimes don't feel the need to do this, but if they don't get rid of the mucus, it can lead to an ear infection.
- Echinacea is good for both prevention and treatment. It is recommended to take for 2 weeks at a time, and then have a break before restarting if necessary.
- Steam inhalations clear the nose and help prevent infections. For a cold, use Chamomile tea and for a cough, thyme tea. Make tea in a bowl, then with a towel over your head, make a tent over the bowl. Be careful not to touch the hot sides of the bowl. For children, 5 to 10 minutes breathing in the steam is enough. Stay in a warm room for one hour afterwards.
- For inflammation of the nose, sinuses or throat, a mustard footbath is an interesting treatment. Tie a handful of freshly ground mustard seed into a cloth and place in a bucket of warm water. Keep feet in the bath for no more than ten minutes. Wash hands carefully after preparing the bath and rinse patient's legs and feet thoroughly. Rub legs with a mild plant body oil to finish.

It feels good to be able to treat your children with remedies you've made yourself, even picked from your own garden!

I have found the book 'Guide to Child Health' by Michaela Glockler and Wolfgang Goebel, most useful and some of the remedies above are from there. We have this available in the library at Pukewhau.

Book Review:

Waters of Double Reflections by Ruth Kerr

This is the story of how Michael Park School came to be, and its ongoing evolution, up to 2003. The school began on its present site in Ellerslie in 1979, having started the previous year in a house in Ponsonby. But the first meeting to talk about starting a school was in 1959, 20 years before! During these 20 years a number of playgroups, kindergartens and home school groups came and went.

The parents involved in the early days of the school were very committed and used whatever skills they had to help. The wider anthroposophical community also helped – one mother recalled driving all over Auckland picking up baking from supporters for the first school fair.

The book is well written following a general chronological order. It was interesting to read about the people involved, some of whom I knew of, such as Marjorie Theyer, and finding out just what their role had been. It is clear that everyone gave a lot – of time, energy, money and commitment. There are many points for us to note in our journey to have a school here in the Bay of Islands. Taking an overview shows that things do fall into place and the right person will show up when the time is right. While we are striving for the ‘perfect education’ for our children, the book makes the point that nothing is ever perfect and the children can gain much through the journey – the first few years of Michael Park the school was a building site and interestingly a number of students went on to become architects!

This book gave me motivation as we carry on our journey in providing an education for our children which nourishes their hands, heart and head.



Together we can make great things happen.

Introducing...

Christiane Riegger, a Steiner kindergartner who is currently teaching at Michael Park School in Auckland, has recently bought land in Waimate North. Together with her husband Martin and daughter Naomi, they are planning to build a kindergarten on their land and move up here next year.

Christiane and Martin are from the Black Forest in Germany. They have three children, two living in Sydney now and Naomi, their youngest, who is 12. Martin is a chef and they have travelled with his work, living in Egypt, Kuwait and New Zealand.

Before having children, Christiane worked in special needs in Germany. She was always drawn to children however, and began her Diploma in Early Childhood Education in Auckland. In her second year of study, Christiane learnt about Michael Park School, and was pleased to send Naomi to kindergarten there. She soon became a kindergarten assistant and then took over as kindergartner in Karen Affleck's kindergarten.

From there, Christiane moved to Koru Grove School in Silverdale and with the help and support of the parents there, transformed the mainstream kindergarten into a Steiner one. Christiane really relished this opportunity to use her creativity to provide a wonderful environment for the children. When Koru Grove sadly closed, Christiane went back to Michael Park, taking nine of the kindergarten children with her. She has been back at Michael Park for the last three years, and through this time the dream of having a kindergarten in a natural and rural environment has grown. Now they have bought the land at Waimate North, they are on their way to fulfilling that dream.

*In my head I feel
Warm fount of love
In my heart I feel
Raying light of thought
Now the warm fount of love
Joins with the light of thought
So to make strong my hands
For the good work of Man
I feel me*

Why do we celebrate the change of the seasons?

Integrating our celebrations with movement of the seasons takes us into the deepest level of meaning, and brings us into alignment with cycles of life.

At the most primitive level, our ancestors were attempting to propitiate the forces of nature, at whose mercy we have always lived to ward off destructive floods ensure a bountiful harvest, raise the sun from the dark pit of the year, attract rain-fall and put an end to life-threatening drought. They also sought to revere and honour the wonder of creation.

The benefit of this necessarily close relationship with nature has profound respect and understanding for natural forces. Maintaining our awareness of seasonal change and heightening it with celebration encourages us to foster a respectful relationship with nature to pay attention to the cycles of sun and moon, and to be open to the wonder and mystery of this amazing world in which we live. When we draw on our awareness of other cultural responses to the seasons we open ourselves both to the richness of difference and to the great spirit that runs through all living things as a unifying force.

We unconsciously mould ourselves on the world around us. Our children are in danger of growing up without knowing that for the cows to run dry, the hens to go off the lay or the ground to lie fallow are all part of the natural way. If such concepts are replaced with the illusion of unremitting supply, our children are in danger of growing into young people who drive themselves relentlessly who no longer know the necessity of barren times as well as times of high growth. Nature is the great teacher here. Even if we are no longer working the land, we can stay alive to what is happening in the garden, parks, coastal areas and bush. We can encourage our children to stay alive to the great orchestra of seasonal change and, in doing so, extend their awareness beyond the material world.

When we are alive to the rhythms of life we are more likely to be able to accept change, holding it in a large perspective in which the wheel of the year keeps turning, embracing both darkness and light, growth and fallow periods, germination and ripening, resurrection and decay.

Inspired by *Celebrating the Southern Seasons* by Juliet Batten

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it, begin it now." Goethe

Calendar of Events

Every Monday	Piwakawaka Playgroup at Pukewhau from 9.30—12
Every Monday	Study group at Jane's from 12.15 - 1.15 .
Every Tuesday and Wednesday	Emma and Jeanine's Homebased Care playgroups at Pukewhau
Every second Wednesday	Mother and baby group from 1 - 2.30
Last Friday of the month	Craft group.
Saturday 27th March	Easter preparation for school children at Natascha's.
Monday 29th March	Easter celebration at Playgroup.
Monday 18th April	First day of Term 2.
Friday 30th April	Last light festival.

Food Corner

I would love to have this space for people to share their thoughts on food, tips and recipes. One thing I would like to know more about is adapting recipes (ie using different flours, sweeteners etc) so if anyone has any tips I would love to include them in the next newsletter! In the meantime, here is a recipe we have enjoyed using up our pumpkins in!

Harvest Recipe: Pumpkin Loaf

This makes a lovely spicy loaf.

1 cup pumpkin puree
100g butter
3/4 cup brown sugar or equivalent
2 eggs
2 cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp each of cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, ground cloves

Cream butter and sugar together, add the eggs and beat well, then stir in the pumpkin. Sift the dry ingredients together/ Fold in half of this mixture to the pumpkin mixture, then mix in the remaining half until evenly combined, do not beat.

Spoon the mixture into a lined loaf tin. Bake at 180°C for approximately 40 mins, until a skewer poked into the middle comes out clean.

Store in a loosely covered container or refrigerate in a plastic bag.



Would you like to contribute to the next newsletter? All comments, contributions and help with layout gratefully received! Email Olivia on nedandliv@gmail.com

Thanks to Jane for help in writing the information on the Autumn Equinox and Celebrating the seasons.

This newsletter and other articles of interest will be available on the website of the Bay of Islands Waldorf Education Trust, www.steinerbayofislands.co.nz