

20th July 2009

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new children and their families.

We also welcome Ms Sally Ross (Room 5) and Miss Rachael Versloot (Pukeko) to our teaching staff, Mrs Erica Dam (Kiwi awhina) and Mrs Jeanne Hill (Room 4) to our support staff. Welcome to Willowbank School.

Fantastic Third Term!

It was great catching up with so many children this morning and listening to their holiday stories. Most children I spoke to were really keen to be back at school – I'm unsure if their reaction to the beginning of term was just because I'm the principal or not but as usual I was very impressed with their enthusiasm!

We have another fantastic term planned. Remember you're able to check our term overview online to see what is coming up and keep abreast of any updates or changes.

For the first five weeks the children will continue with their inquiry into communication. Quite a few classes now have wikis where the children are able to share their learning on-line with you. Remember you can sign up too if your child is involved in a class wiki and you would like to be involved in their on-line conversations.

In week 6 we change our curriculum focus to the Arts. We will tell you more on this later in the term.

Next week we have our **3 Way Conferences**. If you have not yet booked your conference time online please may I ask you to do so by either clicking on the weblink on our website or if you are having difficulties booking please contact Frances Fraser in the office.

Your child's 3 Way Conference is an important meeting time for you, your child and your child's teacher. During the conference your child will share their learning achievements and their future learning goals.

We look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday 29th July.

A reminder: Due to the 3 Way Conferences the school will close at 12pm on Wednesday 29th July. Please may I ask you to pick your child/children up on time. SKiDs will be open from 12pm. Please contact Clare Williams for further information on SKiDs bookings.

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Staff Development

During the holidays staff participated in two days of professional learning/development. As part of our ICT contract we were fortunate enough to spend a day with Tony Ryan, a leading Australian educationalist. Tony worked with staff from all three schools (Willowbank, Somerville and Point View) on the potentials of inquiry learning. This approach to learning will become an integral part of our curriculum studies over the next few years.

PTA

We have our first meeting for the term tomorrow night at 7pm in the e-learning centre. Come along and join us. Tomorrow night we will be demonstrating the new cameras – and giving members a chance to create their own slideshow.

Math-a-thon

This term our major fund-raiser is the Math-a-thon. Not only does this help us raise much-needed funds for the school, but it also provides children with a fun way to learn their maths facts.

Maths facts will be given out this week and we hope you will take some time to help your child learn them at home, as they will be tested on these facts on Wednesday 12 August. This gives your child plenty of learning time!

Prior to this test we ask that your child seek sponsorship from friends, family, family workmates, neighbours... Sponsors can sponsor your child for a set amount per correct answer or make a donation. Please ensure the person making the sponsorship offer or donation enters their details on the sponsorship form.

Once the Mathathon test has been held, the class teacher will enter the results on the sponsorship form.

ALL SPONSORSHIP FORMS MUST BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL on or before Friday 7 August please.

Children are asked to collect sponsorship money as soon after the test as possible so we can have all sponsorship money in before Friday 28 August.

Please support your hard working PTA by helping your child to learn his/her maths facts and to gather as many sponsors as possible.

Thank you in anticipation of your support. If you have any questions about the Math-a-thon please talk to your child's teacher or contact Mrs. Danielson (Associate Principal).

Pandemic Update

Earlier this week all schools received an important Pandemic Update from the Ministry of Education.

Schools are no longer being directed to close unless there are high student and staff absences.

It is important that children with underlying health problems such as asthma are monitored carefully for symptoms. We have a checklist of symptoms available to you on the website or by contacting Michelle at the office.

We ask that if your child is unwell that you keep them home until they have fully recovered, even if it is not the flu (remember children with underlying illnesses are more susceptible to the virus).

We will continue to take early action and call parents or caregivers of children who are unwell and attending school and ask that they be taken home.

Celebrating Success

The Incredible SciQuiz: On Monday 6th July the Year 5 and 6 Science teams took part in the Incredible Science Quiz at the Auckland University. Not only did the students have to answer a wide range of questions but they also had to do it in a set time. The Willowbank Teams competed very strongly and showed lots of great teamwork. They were a real credit to the school. The students involved were: Tony Chen, Ryan Monoyoudis, Yavun Khar, Christina Phu, James Tse, Kerman Kohli, Jenna Tredwell, Andrea Macrohon, Campbell Davison, Max Wang, Lucia Wang.

As well as taking part in the quiz students were able to see some fantastic science demonstrations and listen to some great speakers on topics such as "Could Auckland be hit by a Tsunami?"

Rayner Clark writes about her brilliant accomplishments:

On Saturday the 27th June I went to the Auckland Irish Dancing Regionals.

I received a first in the Under 11 Open Girls, which is the highest grade for my age group.

There were 8 of us in the group. I won against the girl who got 2nd at nationals last year, when I came 5th. I have now qualified for the New Zealand Irish Dancing champs this year. I practice twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for almost 2 and an half hours. Our academy, the Doyle Academy received eight first placements in the whole day.

I had to focus and practice really hard everyday.

I received 2 big trophies, some medals and ribbons for winning.

I hope I do well at the nationals this year. I also achieved my goal to get 1st.

By Rayner Clarke

Room 9

Year 6

Congratulations Rayner, we are very proud of you and know just how difficult the competition was.

Congratulations also to Jessica Croy (Rm 14) for her outstanding results in the Auckland Cross Country Championships held yesterday. Jessica came in 3rd in the 9 and 10 year old section. Jessica also won the Auckland Grand Prix series as she received the highest number of points during the series. WOW!

Tony Chen from Room 7 came to see me today with an amazing trophy. Tony won the combined Manukau City Council and Shunde City (China) General Knowledge Test for Year 5 students. Tony was also a member of our Science Quiz team. Congratulations Tony on your success.

Have a great week and we look forward to seeing you next week at the 3 Way Conferences.

Deidre Alderson

Principal

Community Notices

**OUR OWN KIND @ HOWICK LIBRARY 4PM,
FRIDAY 24TH JULY 2009 HOWICK LIBRARY,
UXBRIDGE ROAD, HOWICK, AUCKLAND**

The Howick Library will host readings from *Our Own Kind: 100 New Zealand Poems about Animals* edited by Siobhan Harvey before an audience of school children and general public. Readers include Siobhan Harvey, Riemke Ensing, Renee Liang and Kirsten Warner. The event will also see the announcement of the winners of the 2009 Bernard Gadd Memorial Poetry Competition.

Open to all; free entry. Email Susan Waldmeyer on Susan.Waldmeyer@manukau.govt.nz for further information.