

NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AGM REPORT
2020
GOLDEN SQUARE KINDERGARTEN



Welcome to Golden Square Kindergarten 2020 AGM & Information night. This evening I have the pleasure of presenting this report on behalf of the educators at Golden Square Kindergarten. This will be my 29th report and each year I have been able to talk about new achievements and plans for the future of the kinder. This year I can add online AGM/Information evening.

This year will remain part of history that will be discussing for years to come. The Covid19 epidemic effected everyone across the world. At Golden Square Kindergarten we remained open and in our own little bubble. The children were amazing as they adapted to the new arrival expectations and our families were extremely respectful and supportive of our measures to ensure that we all remained healthy.

Like all education facilities throughout Victoria many children have not accessed half a year of their kindergarten program. Educators remained committed throughout to ensuring that we maintained contact and supplied families with materials, ideas, links to learning opportunities to be used at home.

Unlike schools we were required to program for both home stay and kinder based children as well as manage a vigorous cleaning routine and change-over of equipment several times a week. Our management to reduce cross contamination between groups included educator changes to teams who never met in term two. We were working from home for meetings and preparation. It also included the introduction of lots of new technology that helped us link to meetings, professional development and interactions with families.

Out of these enormous challenges we rallied and it is thanks to all the educators who remained cheerful, committed and resourceful that we adapted. Always stepping up to find ways to continue to provide children and families with a program that met the needs and inspired children to continue to learn.

Technology became our best friend and we were all accepted and adapted to having our meetings on zoom, Webex and other forums. We set up links with our families so we could have personal contact with children and parents. Educators conducted educator meetings and participated in professional development opportunities on line.

We made changes to our computer system so we could access programs from home. We sourced support services, contacts to support all of our kinder community that they could seek help or advice re mental health and wellbeing. We provided social stories for children to learn about covid and to help them understand that we would keep them safe and happy. We provided opportunities for children to talk about covid and we recognised that most children had a great understanding of the changes as they developed and they just needed to opportunities to share this information to make sense of what these details meant for them.

Whilst we missed out on incursions, excursions, family entering kindergarten we tried to provide lots of opportunities for children and educators to celebrate their kinder experience.

We have realised that many of the strategies we have used during this time have led to positive outcomes and we will continue to implement these. Having our committee meeting from the comfort of our homes allows parents more opportunity to attend these meetings.

Children saying goodbye at the front door has led to lots of independence and for families going off to work it has been welcomed.

Transition for 2021 families has occurred this year on public holidays and weekends. This has only occurred due to the Covid19 expectation. We have applied for grants for renovating our bathroom and this needs to occur in the Summer holidays. This project will take longer than the school holiday period so we will finish kinder this year one week earlier and return in 2021 one week later then the recognised school calendar.

After three years we now have a new storage shed on our next door block that will store all the contents of our existing sheds. This shed was required so that we can plan for our future.

In 2022 three-year-old kindergarten will become funded. We currently cannot provide this program as we are at capacity with four-year-old kindergarten.

The government recognition of the importance of children having two years at kindergarten is based on lots of research and the outcomes for these children is significant.

Hence we have applied for a grant to build on a space to provide three-year-old kindergarten, allowing children to remain at our centre for two years.

We are ready to implement this as soon as we acquire the grant. We will be advised in November to whether we are successful in acquiring this funding.

Tonight we will be allocating children to the KANGAROO group (attending Monday, Thursday and Friday mornings) OR the POSSUM group (attending Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons). To be eligible for choosing a group, families must be present at the AGM/INFORMATION night. (With the exception of second years). We hope that all families receive their preference and if you do not, please ask to go on the waiting list for any vacancies.

We do have vacancies in our short and long days so if you know of anyone wanting kinder for 2021 please advise them to contact the kinder. We are also enrolling children for 2022, 2023 as well as taking expressions of interests for three-year-old kindergarten.

Tonight we need to elect a Committee that will ensure that the kindergarten continues to provide services and programs that meet the community's needs. Being part of this Committee will allow you to have a say in how we operate and allow you the opportunity to learn more about how children learn and why kinder is such an important year of learning.

This year we are asking for at least three Committee representatives from each group to nominate for Committee. It is important that families are represented and have a voice in how your kindergarten is governed.

As an independent kindergarten, the Committee is able to make decisions that will directly link to improving our service and meeting the needs of children, families, educators and our community for now and in the future. We can implement change quickly and effectively which allows us to be innovative. Committee are supported by an Administrator who undertakes all the financial and payroll work. We also have implemented a plan where we seek three independent positions from our community who will attend meetings and share their knowledge and skills.

Leanne Grogan, a lecturer from Latrobe University Bendigo was our first community representative and has been with us for the past three years. Unfortunately, she has resigned from this position and we are seeking someone to fill this advisory position. We thank Leanne for her amazing commitment to attending our Committee meetings. We have really benefited from her participation as she shared her knowledge and ideas to help the Committee and educators make decisions to ensure best practice.

Sam Kane joined us in 2018 as our Technology expert to our Committee and he has been really helpful with helping us use media to connect with the community. His knowledge and skills in this area have been paramount to our success with Marketing and Advertising our Centre, all whilst he studies at Melbourne University. This has been important this year as we needed to communicate with prospective families and ensure our website and face book provided families with the information they required to learn about our program and service. Thankyou Sam!

We have one more community position on our committee, we are seeking someone with **business expertise** and we will be advertising for this volunteer in the next year. If you are interested or know of someone who would be interested in filling this role, please speak to educators.

PROGRAM

This year our program experienced some major changes as we remained in our little kinder bubble. Our incursions and excursions were replaced with online incursions. We were fortunate to provide lots of new highlights to our daily programs and each term we had some memorable days that were designed to promote fun and happiness.

Some of these special events included Ninja Days, where we provided the children with extreme obstacle course challenges, Pirate Day, PJ Day, Whacky Wednesday and Freaky Friday where the kinder was turned upside down and we celebrated being crazy. We also had Puppet shows and Cultural celebrations. On each of these occasions, we heard children commenting, "It is the best kinder day ever."

Our program recognises "PLAY" as the way children learn. Children require lots of opportunity to be involved in free play and our outdoor/indoor program provides children with options. We believe that play needs to also be teamed with direct intentional teaching which includes provision of equipment and experiences to promote and extend on children's learning.

Educators use children's interests, knowledge and skill, as well as listening to families and children's voice when planning for individuals and groups.

Our program encompasses the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLF) which covers Numeracy and Literacy, Social and Emotional skills, Gross and Fine motor skills, Language, Science, Dance, Music and Movement, Creativity, Sustainability and Environment, learning about the world, our

community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. Diversity, Inclusion/ Exclusion, Fair/ Unfair and Equality.

One of our major Social and Emotional teaching strategies is implementing the YOU CAN DO IT program & the RULER APPROACH. We believe that children need intentional teaching to develop their social and emotional skills and this will ensure that EVERYONE recognises what they need to say and do to get along with others, including learning about their right to be safe and happy.

The Ruler Approach is an evidence based program developed at Yale to promote emotional intelligence.

The Ruler Approach has provided us with the opportunity to develop a shared plan to recognize that everyone in our Centre understands and practices their right to feel SAFE and HAPPY.

We commence the year by developing a GROUP CHARTER (Also known as our GROUP PROMISE). This promise recognizes how we all want to feel when we attend kinder (SAFE & HAPPY). The children then decide what we will do and say to show how we will be happy and safe at kinder. The third element looks at what to do if we do not feel safe and happy.

This group charter then becomes a living document as we use it constantly to interact with each others. The children quickly learn social skills.

Inappropriate behavior is managed; self-reflection, self-modification, developing empathy and independent skills are encouraged whenever possible.

These programs form the foundation for developing children's Emotional Intelligence.

Our large indoor and outdoor spaces provide children with amazing learning opportunities and we often involve children in the 'work' required to maintain this Centre. This year the children helped empty the sand pit so we could bring in new sand, they helped resurface our playground with two truckloads of softfall, they pot plants and manage our garden.

PARENTS/ FAMILIES

Parents are the most influential people in children's lives, and educators benefit from forming a respectful partnership to share knowledge about children so that we can include interests, skills and recognise goals for future learning.

This year we have been required to look at different ways to interact with families and again we have found some online platforms have been quite popular with families.

We thank families for supporting their children to access and participate in the learning programs we have provided for children. We acknowledge that working from home and home schooling have significantly impacted families capacity to ensure access to kinder and our online/take home components.

We appreciate all your extra support and energy that has been provided by parents to provide children with learning opportunities at home. We have been truly amazed by some of the incredible learning opportunities families have provided for their pre-schoolers and appreciate you sharing these with us.

We thank families for their support and the help they have given us this year. However, the biggest thank you is to your ongoing support, kind words and acceptance of the procedures we implemented to keep our kinder community healthy.

Thankyou to Melissa Wright for being our Scholastic organiser this year. We really appreciate how you have ensured that families have the opportunity to make their orders. The kinder has received some rewards in the form of games, books and resources. THANKYOU!

EDUCATORS

As I reflect I recognise how Golden Square Kindergarten educators form a TEAM of passionate, dedicated and united advocates for Early Childhood Education. Every year we seem to be faced with new challenges, many of which are created by new laws, funding and policies. However, this year my reflection is more looking back and thinking I have been having a bad dream, where the entire world is facing change that effects every sector of our communities.

I believed that Early Childhood Education was again not considered to be part of the Education Department as we had to continue to go to work and place ourselves and our families at risk of contracting this virus.

However, soldier on we did and whilst educators experienced home schooling, working from home, relatives failing health, anxiety and struggled with mental health and financial challenges we maintained our humour and made the best out of each and every day.

I wish to thank my colleagues for sharing the load. The increased cleaning and set up/change over work load that was created was massive and it was only manageable because we shared it. Everyone placed their names

down on the daily rosters regardless of job positions and we shared the humongous piles of washing that occurred daily due to Covid19 policy.

Managing the daily arrival and departure each day was often quiet demanding as we met families, either at their cars or the front gate. Asking those four daily questions on arrival of every parent and child was a procedure that no one enjoyed, however it really did ensure families kept unwell children home.

Educators went out of their way to support families whose kinder child stayed home as they made up experiences and included opportunities to still be participating in the kinder program. Some educators provided home delivery to families who struggled to collect their home stay kits.

All educators became more IT savvy as we conducted online meetings and provided access to future families to find out about our program and enrolments.

THANKYOU to my team-: Danielle Walker, Donna Spillman, Belinda Appleby, Jenny Windridge, Suzy Dalrymple, Julie Herbertson, Vicki Fletcher, Donna Skinner, Michelle Robinson, Tracie Kane, Bonnie Pridham and Zach Lahnn.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Danielle who helped complete the submission for our grants and worked with Sam Kane to use technology to connect with families, particularly tonight as we conduct our first AGM/Information Evening.

ADMINISTRATOR

Jennifer Warren is our administrator who manages the daily financial and administration tasks necessary for our centre to operate. As an independent kindergarten she supports the Committee, in particular the Treasurer to ensure that we not only remain financially viable but also planning for the future.

This year Jennifer has faced termly and sometimes weekly changes as the government implemented extra payments to support the families during the epidemic. Whilst we were really happy to provide free kindergarten for three terms the advice often came after the issuing of invoices and statements.

Jennifer ensured that these changes were continually communicated to families and resulted in paying back fees.

Jennifer has also taken on the constantly changing standards, regulations and guidelines being introduced and changes in the Early Childhood sector.

Having a capable administrator is essential for our parent committee as it ensures consistency throughout the years.

I would also like to say a special thank you for helping me access the documentations and information required to apply for the grant.

THANKS JENNIFER

STUDENTS

This year we have only hosted a couple of students due to lock down and the decision to reduce the people entering the centre.

We look forward to welcoming students in 2021 from Universities, TAFE and Schools conducting Work Experience. We believe students learn valuable skills and gain knowledge in these practicum placements that cannot be found in books. As educators we also learn from them as they talk to us about what they are learning and new practices as they are continually being explored, so we all benefit.

I thank all our centre educators who have supported students as it does require time to mentor, support, planning and writing reports in an already busy schedule.

VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to Chris Ellerton for helping preparing materials and making new couch covers. We have missed your weekly visits. To Gwen Smart who types up the children's voice to share with you at various times of the year. THANK YOU!

GARDENER/MAINTENANCE

Thank you to Dean Reed who has had a lot more work this year as we were not able to have our working bees or seek kinder community help to complete lots of OH & S considerations.

Dean has been working many extra hours to keep our new next door block clean and tidy and removing the trees in the water catchment that runs along the fence. He has supported the children by finishing emptying and filling the sand pit with new clean sand.

Thank you Dean for your commitment.

CLEANING

Dave Kane has been very important in ensuring that we maintained the cleaning expectations necessary to reduce the risk of a Covid19 outbreak. He is always so appreciated when he returns order and ensures that the centre remains clean and tidy after our very busy days. THANK YOU DAVE!

COMMITTEE This year's committee been faced with lots of new challenges and have managed to govern these throughout the stay at home period. The online Committee meetings have been very successful and will remain as they are the preferred option to hold future meetings.

We have reviewed and implemented policies and the Committee has been supportive of the building of our new shed and applying for the three grants.

This year President is Rachel Tingley who accepted this position without any previous experience. She has quickly adapted to the role of President supported by her Vice President, Ashleigh Needs, Secretary, Katie Reid and Treasurer Brett Burdeu.

We also thank all of our exiting General Committee members -: Chris Booth, Kristy Dupille, Kelly Quinlan, Kelly Wilson, and April Tattersall.

As our 2020 Committee, you have been very committed to ensuring the smooth operation of the centre, sharing the workload and using your expertise to make good management decisions, imperative in operating our centre.

I urge you to continue to be involved in your child's school and other organisations as you now know you can make a difference and that your input is valued.

THANKYOU

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS– A few of our major achievements are: -

- Updating policies
- Building shed on next door block ready to store existing storage.
- Submitting three grant applications.
 1. IT Grant \$1500– which we received to purchase a new lap top.
 2. Bath room renovation
 3. New extension that creates a new classroom, staff room, office and meeting area.
- Educators have all completed CPR UPDATES
- Educators completed Child Protection professional development.
- Receiving the healthy Achievements Award.
- Developing a Central Bendigo Early Years Network (This consists of schools, kindergartens and Child care representatives meeting regularly to develop early Childhood initiatives)
- Increasing hours for Educational Leader partner.

I look forward to getting to know all our new families in 2021 and developing our new community relationships.

NEXT YEAR

This concludes my report and I look forward to working with the new committee. The handover meeting on MONDAY the 16th of November 2020 at Golden Square Kindergarten at 8.00pm.

Carol O'Bree
Educational Leader
Nominated Supervisor
Golden Square Kindergarten