

# Philomath Montessori School Newsletter

APRIL 2018



## Learning from true stories

By Doni Manning-Cyrus

What a wonderful unit of study New Zealand has proven to be. It is so gratifying to hear the kids talk about facts and impressions they have gleaned from all the True Stories that Jessica and I have told about “The Land of the Long, White Cloud.” To be sure, some kids have absorbed more than others, but every child gets to hear a well-crafted story, to delight in rich and interesting language, and to receive the impression that Jessica and I think that foreign countries and beings from other lands are fascinating and worth knowing.

We have shared stories of some of NZ’s memorable birds such as kiwis, godwits and yellow-eyed penguins. We have listened to the singing of Kiri Te Kenawa, NZ’s world-renowned opera diva, and danced to her music.

When I introduced the idea of the Maori’s intimidating war-dance, the Kapa Haka, and played some authentic music and suggested we do our own Kapa Haka to the best of our ability, most of the kids were game. One child indicated that he would not dance, but he did join us and was with us when we began dancing. He just stood there. After a while, watching and listening to this lively music with a strong beat, his hand formed a fist. Then that fist began bobbing, then pumping up and down. Then the boy wiggled his hips. He stomped his feet. Soon he was dancing, sticking out his tongue (it’s part of the dance and makes one look scary) and slapping his thighs (also



**Clockwise from bottom left, Isaac, Astrid, Roo, Cassidy, Nico and Gabe pose with a snowman. While we’ve been enjoying winter and now spring here in Oregon, the people of New Zealand, which the children have been studying, were experiencing summer and now fall.**

part of the ritual) with the rest of us. I guess Gloria Estefan was right. The rhythm is eventually gonna getcha!

We have seen pictures of elaborately tattooed bodies and faces and pictures of the tools used to open up the skin so that soot-stained fat can be rubbed into the openings and create these designs. We learned that tattoos indicate status and bravery. We have heard stories about enormous and elaborately carved canoes; the beauty, isolation and hardship of life on a

remote sheep station; and the foodways of both Maori and “pakehas” (people of European ancestry). We had an experience to show us how much 10% is. Ten percent is the percentage of Maori people in NZ. We’ve seen pictures of ski resorts in NZ and heard stories of Jessica’s recent forays down Hoodoo! We’ve talked quite a bit about north and south in our discussion of the hemispheres and how Oceania enjoys seasons in opposition to our own and how NZ has a North and South Island. The

kids in the afternoon have really enjoyed the myths and legends of the Maori. The stories are quite advanced in language and emotion, feature monsters and shocking acts of violence, like abandoning a friend at sea so you can steal his mate or choking out a taniwha (Maori trickster monster). Fairy tales containing such vile behavior are necessary for children over the

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age of 5 to safely introduce them to the idea that evil exists in the world.

At the end of our study, we celebrated Waitangi day, New Zealand's national holiday, with song, dance and refreshments. We sang "Epo i Tai Tai E" (which translates to "I will not be sad. I will be happy"). We played a dance/game to the Polynesian sea chanty "John Kana," which we have sung before, and then we danced the Kapa Haka. Some kids were REALLY into it and tried to be as intimidating as possible until they eventually got the giggles and lost their fearsome façade. One little girl did not like the sound of the whole endeavor and she went to sit at a table and covered her ears. One little girl stood off to the side at first, but soon enough began making subdued Kapa Haka movements with us. As I told the children the story of how my mother and her island neighbors cooperated to send us ANZAC cookies for everyone to take home, I could feel my stock rising. Cookies? Cookies! Everyone likes cookies! Five kids were absent, which is unfortunate, but just try to have everyone here on any given day! It's futile!

**W**e have presented some helpful and much-needed Grace and Courtesy lessons of late, such as "How to catch someone safely while playing chase," "How to tell someone to stop chasing you," "How to turn and look when someone calls your name," "How to answer someone when the answer will disappoint them." This last one proved necessary when some of our kids would let their friends make the same request over and



**Jessica works with (from left) Rolly, Ella, Isaac and Gabe in the garden.**

over, without answering. It turns out, these kids were reluctant to tell their friend, "No, I don't want to do that." And we just recently reviewed our old stand-by, "How to say thank you."

On the shelves, you might notice some new dressing frames are out and others have been placed in storage. We have replaced our bolt driving board with a more advanced screw-

driving board. We have an eye-dropper transfer activity that requires a great deal of dexterity for some children. We have a braiding board to practice braiding hair. We now have a cross-stitch sewing activity. We have "Continent Animals" in which models of indigenous animals are grouped by continent. In art, we have replaced play dough with real clay, which strengthens hands and allows for actual carving with tools. We may not be able to safely carve wood here, like the Maoris do, but we can carve clay! Leslie has provided us with marble painting (one rolls a paint-covered marble over their paper inside a plastic tub), watercolor painting and making yarn dolls, among other works. The few children who have made yarn dolls are very excited about this. One child said, "I like making my own doll so I don't have to ask my parents for one and we can save money!" There is a great deal of satisfaction in being self-sufficient!

I wish all our families a pleasant spring break, happy Easter and a good Passover. My husband, Andy, and I will be going up to visit my mom on Decatur Island, gathering and stacking firewood for her, reading books and walking our dogs daily on the beach. When we return, we teachers will continue to prepare for parent teacher conferences. Jessica and I look forward to meeting with everyone. Shortly after the break, we will begin our final cultural study of the year – Estonia!

Best regards,  
Doni



**Nora practices her number skills with the units, tens, hundreds and thousands.**

# Out of this world fundraiser

Exploring uncharted territory for PhMS, we discovered a new frontier! Shifting gears, our fundraising efforts have moved away from a large, laborious event to an evening of community fun. The Love of Learning Benefit Concert was a stellar event and we are sending out universal waves of gratitude to the community for your support!

We made it look easy, but it still took numerous volunteers from the parent community. From the beginning, many individuals stepped up to head a committee in preparation for this cosmic evening. We are in awe of the enthusiasm and support from the entire school community.

**Rachel Houtman** and alumni parent **Leanne Miller** brought together new ideas and past success to contact and follow up with the many sponsors for our event. We are inspired by the community support and dedication of our sponsors: **IBEW Local 280, Barker Uerlings Insurance, AutoTech, Philomath Family Medicine, Pioneer Telephone Cooperative, Korvis Automation, Polk Avenue Pottery, and E.D. Hughes Excavating.** Thank you!

After considering the musical vibe we wanted to create, **Shannon Zuschlag** jumped right in to contact, communicate with, and organize local bands with deep roots in the larger community. The danceable intergalactic groove of the **Space Neighbors** and **Cassandra Robertson's** melodious folk harmonies hit the spot!

While many of us were blindly charting new territory, it was indispensably valuable to have a seasoned pro with us from the start. **Kristen Arzner's** restaurant and event experience made her our go-to person. She was always available to answer the unrelenting list of questions about planning the event and took care of all our food and beverage needs with ease and patience.

In this new age of technology, **Karen Petersen** led us to the best advertising options to reach our target audience and enthusiastically filled all of our volunteer positions for the event. **Rachael Oehler** created beautiful, eye-catching posters and advertisements to spread the word throughout the larger community, never hesitating to make last-minute changes and adjustments. Many thanks to all the families that posted flyers around town to get the word out!

**Kai Foster** sifted through the options and selected the perfect venue for our event. Our efficient set-up crew, made up of **Kai Foster,**



**Doni was treated to not one but two complimentary pilsners during her stand-up routine at the Love of Learning Benefit Concert.**

**Andy Foster, Shannon Zuschlag, Sirje Tamm, James Deatherage, Chris Russo, Candace Russo, Jocelyn Eisenlohr, and Liz Grant,** arrived early to transform the space into a smooth-flowing combination of dance floor and chill areas for eating and chatting. Our signage, both inside and out, informed concert goers of important information in a stylish manner thanks to **Rachael Oehler's** clear designs, and **Rachel Houtman** strategically placed donation jars around the venue accompanied by our super-cute class photo. **Alalia Berry** swooped in at the last minute with ten gorgeous centerpieces that created the final touch!

**Nick and Kristen Arzner** and their able-bodied **Block 15 crew** plunged in during set up and were an invisible force of efficiency putting together the bar and buffet. They created a delicious spread of food choices that was a crowd-pleasing success. During the event, they poured thirst-quenching beer and cider for the

majority of the night, taking only a few short breaks to check out the concert. **Alicia and Tyler Jones** were right there to relieve them at any point if needed. We are awe-struck by the generosity of **Block 15 Brewing Company** and **2 Towns Cider** for donating all of the food and beverages to benefit our school. Cheers!

We are grateful to the many individuals who stepped up to be the smiling faces at the admission table: **Jocelyn Eisenlohr, Rebecca Veltri, Jeff Siler, Chris Russo, Tara Starr Marvin, Julie Wiethorn, Rachael Oehler, and Palmer Vilagi.** They volunteered knowing that they would be taken away from the festivities in order to help out. To my pleasant surprise, the location of the admission table allowed our volunteers to still be able to view the concert while monitoring the comings and goings of the guests. How wonderful!

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**Alalia Berry's floral centerpieces put the finishing touches on the tables at the Love of Learning Benefit Concert.**

An added bonus to the evening was the highly successful raffle organized by **Kimberly Purdy**. Kimberly's smiling face greeted our guests with friendliness and conversation as she shared her passion for the school. Her beautiful assistants, **Elke Wiethorn** and **Sirje Tamm**, staffed the raffle table throughout the night, motivating concert goers to purchase tickets. The trio was hard to miss with the adorable, colorful aprons handmade by **Audrey Deatherage**.

A heartfelt thank you to **Doni Manning-Cyrus** for being our emcee for the evening. Her perfect mix of sincerity and wit got the important announcements of the evening across. Her brief segments of standup comedy were a hilarious addition and highlight of the evening, as well as her passionate introduction of the Space Neighbors. I'm still laughing!

Sticking around to the very end, our clean-up crew, **Shannon Zuschlag, Kail**

**Zuschlag, and Kevin Huelick**, were so fast and efficient that we were out the door and home before midnight. That brought us to the end of a very enjoyable and successful evening shared with friends and family ad for that we, the staff, the board, and the children, are so very grateful. Mission accomplished!

### **Online Auction**

Though February seems like lightyears ago, let's not forget the successful online auction! This new endeavor, suggested and implemented by **Amy Ward**, took the most desirable items from past auctions and paired them with a new online platform for an enhanced, stress-free auction experience. We couldn't have done it without Amy's self-starting attitude and proficient follow through. From updating the spreadsheets for the current year to researching online platforms to inputting all the pertinent information, Amy was always a step ahead!

Thank you very much to all the individuals who solicited donations this year: **Kristen Arzner, Karin Hart, Doni Manning-Cyrus, Audrey Deatherage, Karen Remedios, Les Oehler, Jocelyn Eisenlohr, and Candace Russo**. Together you assembled the perfect combination of items! **Leah Houtman** handwrote and sent thank yous to the donors, and as the auction wrapped up, **Tara Starr Marvin** efficiently delivered the auction loot to the winners. Our humble little auction brought in a whopping \$3,000.



During this year of fundraising transitions, we feel honored to have such a dedicated and generous school community. We thank you for continuing to make Philomath Montessori a priority, providing your suggestions and feedback, and for being present in the lives of your children and our community. Our appreciation is overflowing!

## **Newsline**

❖ **Parent-Teacher conferences** occur throughout the months of April and May. We highly recommend that you observe in the classroom prior to your conference. Signups for observations will continue to be posted in the hallway through April.

❖ Our **last parent meeting of the year** is scheduled for Thursday, April 19, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

❖ Our second **Children's Open House** will be on Thursday, May 3, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

❖ There is **no school** in recognition of Memorial Day, May 28.

❖ The **End-of-the-Year Potluck** will be Saturday, June 2, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the schoolyard.

❖ The **last day of school** is Thursday, June 7, and class ends at noon for all students.

❖ Please note that we are no longer pursuing the BoxTops for Education fundraising option. After further research, participation in the program required more effort than the fundraising benefit. All BoxTops collected up to this point will be donated to Philomath Elementary.

**Next up in our international studies: Estonia! If you happen to have any artifacts from this northern European country, please bring them in to share.**

# Thank You!

## Classroom and Take Home Projects

Cut burlap and muslin fabric for sewing – Kai Foster

Sew classroom card envelopes (many!) – Tara Starr Marvin

Prepare and maintain Tasting Bottles – Kimberly Purdy Schultz

Classroom Cleaning – Audrey Deatherage, Jocelyn Eisenlohr, Dave Williams, Amy Bassett, and Kai Foster

New laundry parent – Rebecca Veltri

Pruning fruit trees – Tyler Jones

## Donations

Flowers – Elke Giftai, and Liz Grant and Jeff Siler (twice!)

ANZAC cookies!! – Sara Gartner (the commissioner

and Doni's mom), John Burbidge (the baker) and the sweet mail carrier who made the delivery from Decatur Island

## Sharing

Nepal artifacts – Chris Petersen and Amy Ward

New Zealand artifacts – Kai Foster

## Other

Post Open House fliers – Audrey Deatherage, Kristen Arzner, Karen Remedios, Karin Hart, Tara Starr Marvin, Kai Foster, Rebecca Veltri, Alicia Jones, Amy Bassett, Karen Petersen, and Jocelyn Eisenlohr

Open House parent hosts – Alicia Jones, Candace Russo, Kimberly Purdy Schultz, Karin Hart, and Alalia Berry

Setup Google group – Jeff Siler



Zedro washes an underlay.



Mackay creates a flower lei.



Rose stitches a sewing card.