



Creative & Purposeful Learning

Wild Cherry Steiner School

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Annual Report 2014

Enrolments

2014 saw us extend to Class 2 and we started the year with 20 children - 8 children in Prep and 12 in Class 1 & 2 - and ended the year with 22 children - 11 Preps and 11 in Class 1&2. We employed two full-time equivalent staff with Wendy taking the Prep Class and introduced a job share situation for Class 1 & 2, with Julia working four days a week and Anita Padula taking the class on Fridays for Term 1 and 2, and then Martin Poeder from Term 3.

Staff

After 2013 being a year where most other tasks around the school were done voluntarily, we introduced paid support staff in 2014 with Cath Lanigan employed 17 hours a week as School Administrator, Karen Graham 10 hours a week as Office Manager, Karen Waddell employed as Cleaner five hours a week, and Nina Stewart as Gardening and Maintenance coordinator on a casual basis a few hours per week.

Attendance

Attendance at school overall was 91%. We will continue to work towards a higher attendance rate.

School Board

Our constitution was revised at the 2014 AGM formally making way for the introduction of a new Board structure and a school leadership team. The Board was elected with Robyn Browne as Chair, Chris Walker as Deputy Chair, Michael Hack as secretary, and Martin Poeder, Wes Vague and Ben Cooper as general members. Later in the year Martin resigned to become a staff member, and Karen Crawford joined the Board as a parent representative. It gives us a board with expertise in management, law, finances, and education. The Board has responsibility for the strategic, legal and financial overview of the school with Co-Principals' Julia Karas and Cath Lanigan having delegated responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school. The community board model was one favoured by the VRQA, the school registration board, and the leadership team model is increasingly being used in Steiner schools. This structure has been working smoothly and well.

School survey

We undertook an Australian government generated survey of parents which showed high levels of satisfaction with the school and children's learning.

100% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that:

- Teachers at this school treat students fairly
- My child feels safe at this school
- I can talk to my child's teachers about my concerns
- My child likes being at this school
- This school looks for ways to improve
- This school takes parents' opinions seriously
- Teachers at this school motivate my child to learn

Other results

Parents agreed or strongly agreed:

- This school is well-maintained: 95%
- Teachers at this school provide my child with useful feedback about his or her work (94%)

- Student behaviour is well managed at this school (90%)
- Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best (84%)

We encourage parents if they have concerns to talk with their child's teacher or a Co-Principal.

Building works & Masterplan

We were successful in receiving a \$42,000 grant from the Federal Government to create a new general learning area and art room and this was successfully completed in December. The funding also allowed the hallway floor which was starting to deteriorate to be replaced.

This grant included development of a Master Plan for the school. We had intended to purchase the current site to be the future school site but further investigation into high costs of subdivision, asbestos on other parts of the site which would require removal, high costs of maintenance and retrofitting in addition to purchase price of site and the question of long-term suitability led the Board to decide to instead investigate purchasing land for a purpose-built school. A bush site close to the school was investigated and is still under consideration.

Professional Development

Professional Development for staff included attendance at Steiner Education Australia's Governance Leadership & Management conference, Calmers Classrooms PD, Victorian Steiner Teachers PD at Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School, Dyslexia PD, first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis training and the VRQA's financial analysis for schools seminar. We were also actively involved with Steiner Education Australia attending twice yearly delegates meetings, with representatives from the 42 member schools.

Steiner Teacher Development Program

For the second half of the year Julia ran a program for staff and those interested in doing CRT work at the school providing a combination of the study of anthroposophy and practical classroom skills with eight enrolled to provide this knowledge for those interested in working in the school who did not have Steiner teacher training.

Finances

The school ended the year in a strong financial position with a surplus of \$200,000. We had income of \$492,000 and expenses of \$292,000. We spent the year operating on a conservative budget as we had been advised that we may not receive the Federal Government funding we had been initially promised and it was not until September that this was finalised. This was because when the funding for 2014 was determined the government did not possess the relevant 2013 data for our school and assumptions were made as to what level of funding the school should receive. In order not to penalise schools such as ours the Australian Government determined that it would pay these schools according to whichever transition arrangements resulted in greater funding, making us a well-funded school. We can expect a similar level of funding for the next four years and can plan accordingly. The auditor's report is attached.

School Improvement Plan

We developed a School Improvement Plan which covers the areas of:

- An explicit improvement agenda
- Analysis and Discussion of data
- Targeted use of school resources
- An expert teaching team
- Systematic curriculum delivery
- Differentiated teaching and learning
- Effective pedagogical practices
- School-community partnerships

The plan is available on our website.

Festivals

The autumn and winter festivals were great celebrations with more than 200 attending the winter festival and sharing in the children's performance, lantern walk, spiral and feast. The Spring Fair

was again a great success raising approximately \$4000 and being a wonderful community celebration.

Parent Engagement Group

We established a Parent Engagement Group to enable parents to be involved in discussion around developments at the school and it was great to have representatives from each class and also the Kinder involved.

Kindergarten and Playgroup

The weekly Wild Cherry playgroup continued to be popular with Daya Jepsen running two sessions on Mondays at the kinder. The Kindergarten continued to be managed by Uniting Care Gippsland and had a good year with approximately 18 children in the 4yo program and 13 in the 3yo program.

*Co-Principal
Cath Lanigan*