

BEECHWORTH MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S GROUP INC

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR AGM 18 MARCH 2015

It was barely 12 months ago that our school community moved itself from its home at Mayday Hills to Gilchrist Ave. This time was a period of great change and one which set our students, staff our parents and ourselves as committee members with some real challenges. It was wonderful to see these challenges largely met through the commitment, volunteerism and passion of our school community in an environment of scarce resources and uncertain funding from the federal government.

This commitment, volunteerism and passion should be cherished and celebrated as it truly provides the difference between average schools and great schools, and indeed average communities and great communities. I think Maria Montessori would be pleased. The last twelve months since our move, has been, consciously a time of consolidating and refining our educational program in our new environment, whilst tidying up some unfinished moving loose ends and setting a financial platform for the sustainable and targeted improvement of our infrastructure. We have been very fortunate to have had a highly efficient and diligent principal to develop a seven pillars approach to planning and controlling our future development. For this, Heather we thank you sincerely. The crucial role of principal is a difficult one and I have admired your grit in a challenging year.

To our staff we thank you. The proof of your professionalism and commitment shows in the children who come home each evening and engage with us in a respectful, mature and energised way. Your work goes above and beyond meeting requirements (to use an inspiring term from the public sector). When we look around the school we get a real sense of educators who really care. As a committee we have made a commitment to establish a financial model which will allow for a staff pay scale and hierarchy which is respectful of your efforts and sustainable. After all the quality of our educational program is the key to our future and you are the drivers of this program.

To our committee members, I would like to thank you for the efforts you have made, often after long working hours to move our school forward. Our finances are in good shape thanks to the prudent and strategic guidance of our treasurer, Lara Block. It is not easy to deliver a quality educational program at a price which doesn't exclude a large section of our community and also develop our school's infrastructure sustainably. A look at the fees of other Montessori schools and private schools does show that we are significantly more accessible than nearly all. I know Lara will retire from the committee from the end of this term and look forward to someone stepping up to learn from her in this transition year.

Another departing (temporarily) committee member who has been crucial to our development is Rachel Bohm. Rachel has been an invaluable contributor to the development of our built infrastructure over a long period of time, and has a commitment to honouring Montessori principles in her design and material choices. Thank you Rachel- you mean so much to this place.

To Pam Walpole our secretary, thank you for your attention to detail, critical thinking and load sharing during my absence through my own and family illness.

This coming few years represents an opportunity for our school to continue to build on the achievements we have made so far. The well documented seven key areas strategic plan and implementation plans developed by Heather and the committee, provide a rudder for the journey forward. I look forward to sharing this journey with you all, Skip and Charlie and wish the incoming committee all the best in improving the lives of our children through Montessori education.

Seane Pieper