



‘Belong, Grow, Blossom’

Canterbury Norwood Kindergarten

There’s a 27-year-old cherry tree at the end of the long, private playground at Canterbury’s Norwood Kindergarten. The children watch as it progresses through the seasons. If it blossoms before the end of third term, they know they will have lots of cherries to eat before the end of the kinder year.

The tree is the inspiration for the kindergarten’s pathway for the children’s learning and development: *belonging* to a family and a community, *growing* a sense of identity and self-confidence, and *blossoming* from their learning experiences.

I visit on a Monday in the third week of the kindergarten year. It is the quiet time after lunch and all the children are sitting on the floor of the music room listening to Karen, teacher to the 4-year-olds, play calming music.

Music is a big part of the program at Norwood and it is part of every kinder session. ‘We sing and dance inside and outside and we use music to reflect our moods during the day’, says Kindergarten President, Megan Robinson. ‘By using music, rhythm and song, the children gain physical, visual, linguistic, aural and musical skills.

After quiet time, it is time for free play.

There is an explosion of energy as children burst from the music room. Some children stay inside. One group sits on the floor in one of the rooms to play with a wooden train set. Near them, one of the mothers sits on a sofa reading to her son and another boy.

Another group of children heads to the outdoor play space to run around. Karen keeps an eye on them to watch when the energy needs to be diverted into more structured activity. She has been teaching at the kinder for 20 years and is passionate about helping children develop confidence, individuality and age-appropriate skills. She gives the example of the play area. ‘Our playground gives children the opportunity to develop a range of gross motor skills such as climbing, balancing and co-ordination and for children to use their imaginations to change the spaces’, she says.

Norwood is a small community-managed kindergarten where staff and parents work

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in partnership. It has been operating from the same premises since 1947 and is embedded in the community. This is nowhere shown better than by the number of past students of the kinder enrolling their own children as students.

The kinder is proud of its forward-thinking pre-school program with its emphasis on play-based learning. Recently it received a grant to develop an indigenous program, to provide professional training for staff and embed a focus on aboriginal culture into the curriculum, with a number of activities planned for this year. It also received a sustainability grant to encourage the children to enjoy gardening by installing a sensory garden, outdoor stage and water tank off the cubby in its outdoor play area.

The kinder will be moving to the new Canterbury Community precinct when it opens in Canterbury Gardens in early 2022.

Jenny Norvick



Following our AGM in November we are delighted to welcome two new members to the CCAG committee – local residents Tim Wilkinson and Peter Barclay, also a Maling Road Trader. Tim and Peter join our continuing committee members and local residents Peter Jenkins, Rob Ewing, Gordon Black and John Constable.

CCAG is currently reviewing its activities and priorities for 2020, which include:

- Investigating the introduction of a Facebook private group for improved communication within the Canterbury community.
- Organising working bees, starting with Clean Up Australia around Canterbury Station on 7 March
- Encouraging everyone to reduce carbon emissions.
- Facilitating murals at Maling Road Shopping Centre
- Assisting Council with Maling Road placemaking
- Meeting with Council on traffic and parking issues
- Lobbying governments to improve safety at Canterbury Road and parking at Canterbury Station
- Growing our Urban Forest
- Delivering “3126” to our community.

CCAG is **your** organisation and we are very keen to hear from the community so please tell us what you think are the most important issues facing Canterbury and its residents. To contact us:

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