Dear Milford Lodge Families,

What fantastic weather we have been enjoying lately! Whilst we play outside in all conditions – these really have been the ultimate Queensland winter days. (Especially considering we kicked off this quarter with cyclone Debbie!)

Whilst we have enjoyed a very busy second quarter, the third is generally our busiest. There are many events for children which ensure that our calendar is overflowing for July through September, including the many hours which are kindly donated by many to get ready for our annual Milford Lodge Community Market Day.

Happy Reading

~Team Milford

Please remember that Milford Lodge closes for three weeks over the Christmas / New Year period each year.
LAST DAY OF SERVICE OPERATION FOR 2017: Friday 22nd December
FIRST DAY OF SERVICE OPERATION FOR 2018: Monday 15th January

Staff News

We said farewell to Bec a few weeks ago. Bec is off on the trip of a lifetime, globetrotting for the next 4 months. We're sure she will have an amazing time!

Thank you to all of our families for making Jane feel so welcome at Milford Lodge. Jane has joined the School House team and is enjoying the freedom our children experience every day at Milford Lodge.

Joe has also joined the Milford Lodge team and so far, has enjoyed spending time with the children in the Art Shed.

Over the past few months we have had some fantastic students on placement with us. Judd and Anna have both been amazing during placement – thus we have snatched them up for any days that they are free to join us 😉

Jack (one of our dads), who is studying to be a chef, helped us out by jumping into the kitchen for a day in Ravena's absence. Jack provided a delicious lunch for us, as well as our morning and afternoon tea. What was really lovely, was the feedback he gave as a parent though. As with most Wednesdays, I had offered assistance with the children making the sandwiches for morning tea. Jack hastily chopped up all the bananas for us, after which I explained that the children actually do all of that themselves and choose their own ingredients and flavour combinations (see Sandwich Makers later in the newsletter). After the morning session, whereby some children had chosen to start inside, making sandwiches, exploring lavender dough, and creating with transformer Lego, Jack said to me, "Wow! They all speak like adults!" Well, that is how we roll….

Males in Early Childhood are few and far between, so we feel extremely fortunate to have had two educators and a chef join us within a few weeks of each other.

Each year we are approached by year 10 students from all over the Sunshine Coast who are interested in Early Childhood as a career path. Clementine, Abbie & Lulu all joined us for a full week for their year 10 work experience in mid-June. During the week, all 3 students joined in with all different rooms / groups of children, assisted with daily care routines and cleaning tasks, and were very happy to jump in wherever they could lend a hand. Having the full week of experience allows the student to decide on whether they would like to apply for a school based traineeship for their senior high school years, and we are hoping that at least one of these amazing young people sign up for one of our traineeship positions opening up toward the end of 2017.

During Term Three, we will have placement students from the University of the Sunshine Coast joining us. These students are studying their Bachelor in Early Childhood.

Kitchen Hands: Sandwich Makers

Constant questioning, thinking and reflecting. These are what are required for continual improvement of program and practise. A few short years ago, during a day in the kitchen, I held up a long green leafy covered parcel and asked the children nearby if they knew what was inside. The children were all ages around 3-4 years. Not one of those children knew what I was holding. A little warning light went off inside my head. Something wasn't right here. Every single one of those children would easily smash an entire plate of sliced, cooked corn cobs, yet not one of them knew what the original packaging looked like. It was around the same time that our relationship with Urban Food Street was blossoming and so the evolution of our Kitchen Hands began.

Over the past few years we have become exceptional seekers of hidden corn (Hide'N'Seek Corn), shown ninja fast precision when chopping mushrooms and worked on this little tiny finger and hand muscles when the beans need their tops and tails snapped off.

One morning earlier this year, going about the usual morning open routine, I asked Ravena what the children could help with – however none of those foods that we had become experts at preparing were being used that day. No worries, we'll make the sandwiches.

So out went the pretty red and white checked table cloths (donated by one of our amazing families, thank you!), lovely little bowls of vegemite, child sized bread boards and butter knives.

One of the very first (and typically -Milford Lodge – opinionated wee folk arrived at the table only to let me know that she didn't like vegemite. We shared a conversation about this, as I don't really like it either, unless it is paired with something else, like cheese or avocado. But Flossie, dear Flossie, well… she prefers honey.

Down the stairs I go, and return with bowls of the sweet substance from hard working bees, all the while the cogs going haywire in my head.

Whilst it is fantastic that the chefs provide different flavour combinations for the sandwiches – it is time limited to be able to make a variety every day. Why not get the children to make the sandwiches, and have a variety of ingredients for them to choose from? And so, the Sandwich Makers part of our 'Kitchen Hands' began to evolve.

Like with some other parts of our program, it has been interesting to offer this on the same day each week (Wednesday mornings) for a period of time to be able to watch the children on that particular day develop their skills – and they most certainly have!

We have children of all ages join the table for a period of time from a few minutes through to half an hour. They choose from a variety of sweet and savoury ingredients, many of which require some form of preparation. They peel and chop bananas, grate carrots, spread condiments, and squish heavily loaded sandwiches together to be able to cut with a very large serrated knife – and yes, they also use the very large serrated knife! Some children require assistance with this (many of whom are happy to ask for help), however after a few times many of the older children are quite capable of doing this themselves. We discuss safety all the while – it is always reminded to move the sandwich

and not the knife, so that the knife blade is always facing away from you so that it is in a good, strong position to be able to cut with.

After the sandwich has been cut into quarters, the children quite often choose one of the quarters to taste, and the rest go on the platters for morning tea. Sometimes they do not eat the entire quarter, and take some over to share with the chickens.

Fast forward to a few days ago, where my little friend Lily, with excellent taste (and perhaps a secret love of Heston Blumenthal?) created a masterpiece. Banana and Tuna Sandwich.

And seeing as I am such a sharing and caring kind of person, I asked Lily if maybe Ravena might like a taste of the sandwich? Lily thought this was a great idea – of course the chef should try the food! Off she went, down the stairs, calling out to Ravena that she had a sandwich for her to try. Have I mentioned how awesome our chefs are? Ravena, being the awesome sport that she is, gracefully accepted the culinary masterpiece and took a bite.

"Oooooh, that is unusual. And very interesting. But not unpleasant at all. Thank you, Lily!"

Like many of the real tasks that we encourage children to join in with, it would be much quicker and easier for an adult to do. Similarly, with moving chip bark or sand, setting tables or mucking out the 'chook pen'.

I could end with a blurb about real education, but a saying of my dad's comes to mind instead… "If it's easy, it's not for me!" 😊

Written by Molly Stewart

Weekend Workers

After a much needed and very much appreciated holiday in April we are most definitely back!

The weather has been amazing, and so we have been very busy 'weekend workers'.

We currently have a few things on the agenda - two years ago we painted the ballroom. Eventually Margie (AKA Mum) got the time to paint the picture rail, however doors, window frames and skirting have remained unpainted. (Well, the last paint job was probably a few decades ago!).

We are yet to also re-varnish the floor. I have memories of sanding that floor (as a family - Dad, Mum, Joe and I) by hand, every two years in the Easter Holidays. It has not been done since before my dad had the stroke back in 2008, so well overdue!

Other projects happening include the renovations in the dining room and surrounding areas. The small passageway at the front of the house will eventually have a few small offices / non-contact areas for staff as well as another adult bathroom.

Most families will have noticed the construction fencing off the back perimeter. Unfortunately, a few trees near the fence line have slowly grown and pushed parts of the fence. Fortunately, only one of the trees required removal, with the remaining trees just requiring a 'haircut' ☺

The affected fence sections will be replaced over the next fortnight.

Over the next few months we will be beginning to plan our next big project. We had thought that the Library would be the final building on our beautiful property, however after much conversation it has been decided that a current kitchen renovation just won't do! We are now looking to build a brand new kitchen and dining room toward the front of the property - where the double bay carparks are currently located. This would coincide with an overhaul of the entire front car park and garden areas.

Stay tuned.

(As you can see from the picture, we have still had time to refresh a few of our resources along the way)

Recipe from Monica

RASPBERRY RIPE SLICE **GF/DF/VEGAN** **Makes 36 slices**

Ingredients:

250g frozen raspberries, defrosted

350g shredded coconut

250g raw sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 teaspoon sea salt

25g chia seeds

100g tapioca flour

125ml hot water

100g dark chocolate (50-60% cocoa solids best – see on ingredients panel)

Method:

Preheat oven to 160 degrees.

Line a 20 x 30 cm tray with baking paper.

Place all the ingredients except for the chocolate into a mixing bowl.

Using your hands, mix really well, crushing the berries as you go.

Press the mixture into the lined tray and bake for approximately 50 minutes.

It should be pale pink and slightly toasted around the edges.

Allow to cool completely before cutting.

Melt the chocolate and place into a zip lock bag. Snip a tiny hole in the corner of the bag, and use to drizzle the melted chocolate over the cut slices.

TIP: For a really bright pink slice, substitute the water for beetroot juice.

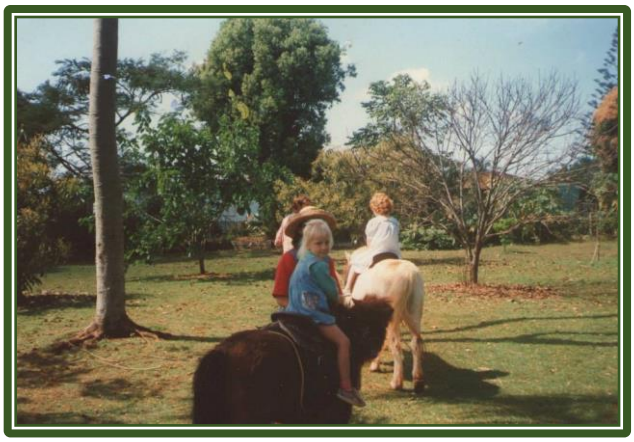
You can also dip the whole bars into the melted chocolate and sprinkle with some finely sliced cranberries or some pretty edible flowers.

www.monicasmixes.com

Animals and children - a perfect combination in an Early Childhood Setting

In the Beginning

Milford Lodge is in its 31st year now and we are always fascinated in hearing recollections from adults who attended Milford as a child. The two main things they remember are the food (or rather the aroma from the kitchen upon arrival) and the animals. Margaretha & Frank's vision of the perfect childhood was to be in a home environment surrounded by a farmyard setting, plenty of outdoor play and going for daily walks in the neighbourhood. Today there is research in abundance that supports their vision regarding all these important notions of what is important to children in their formative years. They instinctively knew that children need animals in their lives.



Present Day Milford Lodge

Fast forward to 2017 and I think the children who attend today will hold precious memories of pony rides on Macca, collecting the eggs from the chickens each morning as well as playful times with our two guinea pigs, the beautiful birds in the aviary and last but not least Lola – Molly's Boxer dog who has started to come for a play regularly. A small group of children brought Lola for a walk recently (or maybe she took them!) and we had lovely comments from parents thanking Molly for allowing their children to do such ''normal '' things whilst attending day care. It is unique opportunities like this that make Milford Lodge such a special place.

Animals are in our Blueprint

Animals are a central part of every child's landscape from birth. If you think about preparing for a baby's arrival, most nursery décor evolves around animal themes, (one of our favourites is www.possandwom.com.au a past parent's creation when she couldn't find any native Australian animals for her baby's nursery). The very first gift your child received was more than likely a stuffed animal toy too! Then afterwards most children's TV shows, movies, music and favourite story books have animals as a central theme.

The Benefits

Interactions with animals are an integral part of our Educational Program and Practice. Providing young children not just with opportunities to see and be near animals, but by giving them the chance to be actively involved in caring for animals is vitally important. Research shows that the more positive early experiences a child has with animals in their childhood, the more likely that child will grow up to be an animal lover. Many of our families have a beloved family pet so are very comfortable about embracing the variety of animals we are fortunate to have live amongst us at Milford Lodge. I always mention to families on tours the many real life ''jobs'' that their children can be involved in at morning drop off time including prepping vegetables for lunch, helping to make the sandwiches for morning tea, setting the dining room, taking washing off the line and then helping to fold it, watering the gardens, raking leaves etc. Each of these ''jobs'' are part of our morning rituals at Milford Lodge and really help the children to settle in to their day knowing that their help is greatly needed and appreciated. What some might see as ''a distraction'' is actually encouraging responsibility and building their self-confidence and self-esteem amongst other important life skills.

Caring for the animals is always a favourite way to start the day amongst all ages. We collect the food scraps from the kitchen and set off to check on the animals, gathering friends on the way as they join the excited group of children. The guinea pigs and birds are usually fed first before making our way over to the chicken coop. Here children greet the chickens by name before collecting the eggs and ensuring that they have clean water to drink as well as their favourite breakfast of porridge oats. The chickens are allowed freedom – just like our children so often we will leave their chicken coop gate open so they can come out for a scratch around and then return to their secure home base whenever they wish. Throughout the day children will often choose to spend time simply hanging out with the animals. This offers the wonderful opportunity to find peace and solitude away from the many exciting experiences going on elsewhere if that is what they need.

Caregiving

Care is a significant part of animal relationships. When children participate in the day-to-day routines of caring for animals, such as feeding, watering, grooming or cleaning their enclosures they develop a sense of what ''caring'' actually means. Children love when the chickens get excited and rush to the gate whenever they see them approach with a bowl of food scraps. The children know that they are behaving this way because they are hungry and we are bringing them food. In the hot summer months, we got into a routine of giving the guinea pigs a cool bath every afternoon followed by patting them down afterwards with a towel and brushing their fur. The guinea pigs seemed to love this pampering and allowed the children to groom them for a considerable amount of time. This simple act of staying still, allowing the children to brush them was the guinea pig's way of responding to the children's act of caring.

Social & Emotional Development

We often find that these close encounters with animals are the perfect opportunity for us to embed our intentional teaching practices around social and emotional development. Occasionally a young child might cause distress to an animal, in these instances we acknowledge that their intentions are usually good despite a tendency to grab an animal roughly. We support the child by talking through their behaviour '' when you squeezed the guinea pig, he tried to get away. I think he was hurt or scared, what do you think?'' Sometimes it is just a knee-jerk reaction i.e. they may be holding a chicken that suddenly flaps their wings and frightens the child. They will usually instinctively drop the chicken. We find that over time children learn to anticipate the animal's reactions and will learn just to lower the chickens down gently rather than instinctively dropping them. This knowledge obviously increases with age and having more opportunities in helping to care for the animals.

Children learn to recognise signs of stress (noise, huddling) and take action to reduce it. Often the older children will verbalise to the younger children why the animals are doing something. This might mean limiting the number of children in the area explaining the reasons or deciding that everyone should leave, as the animals need space and time to be alone now.

Likewise, when the children are playing with Lola we might comment ''Lola is wagging her tail when you pat her gently like that. Do you think she likes it? These social and emotional skills are then easily transferred to interactions with friends. Again we use the same intentional teaching strategies e.g.; '' Harry is frightened when you shout loudly near him or ''Alice won't want to play with you if you hurt her, she will go and find someone else to play with. These are natural consequences of their words and actions that are understood by even very young children.

Ethical Decisions

Milford Lodge has always steered away from participating in the popular chicken hatching programs that many schools and other Early Childhood services offer on an annual basis. We prefer to offer authentic experiences with animals, which are hands-on, supportive of children's understanding and learning and above all respectful to both animals and children. We were pleased to receive an email circulated to all schools and early learning centres last year from RSPCA & Animal Liberation QLD. They implored everyone to reconsider chicken hatcheries as part of their learning programs in light of the welfare and ethical issues involved. In today's world animal welfare is very important and we are happy to be playing our part as role models so our children will value stewardship ethics later in in life.

We are so happy that we can continue to embrace our original philosophy of having animals as a very important part of Milford Lodge. ~ Nancy

☆ School Holiday Program ☆

Wow! What a busy fun filled School Holiday Program we have all enjoyed this winter. The idea for planning a School Holiday program came from when I was working in the kindergarten room alongside another amazing teacher in 2013. We both were concerned that during the School Holidays our children were reluctant to come to Milford knowing that their older siblings were not going to school but instead having play dates with friends, going to the movies, bowling etc.

We thought it would be a nice idea to plan our own exciting ''Theme Days'' with input from the children about what sort of things they would like to do. Our first School Holiday program was a great success. I remember we had a few parents at that time who were teachers, so they had the holidays off anyway and planned to keep their children at home. Most of our children didn't want to miss out on the exciting events we had all planned together and asked their parents if they could come to Milford rather than staying at home. This was what we hoped would happen and so decided to continue offering this program ever since then but we now offer the planned experiences to all children attending not just our Kindergarten group.

Over the past few years the School House Program has evolved into a much-anticipated time of year. We also invite families to join us and have enjoyed numerous Food Street Family Walks, Family Forest Dwellers etc. We usually invite a musician or Artist along to share their talents and Tegan has added another dimension to our Dress up Days and Disco's. We would like to thank all our families for joining in so enthusiastically when it comes to helping their child dress up for these special days. I loved our recent Trolls dance party when lots of children wore colourful clothes or had a fancy hairstyle.

We now also have many older siblings wanting to stay and play during the holidays and because we normally have a number of children away on holiday we can book them in for the day and parents don't have to worry about sorting out alternative arrangements as we know how school holidays can be a tricky time of year for most working families.

~Nancy

Professional Development

April ~ May ~ June

- Presenting at The Programming EXPO at Daisy's Early Learning Centre Logan sharing our Excellent practice with 70 educators from various services in Brisbane and surrounding areas.
- Abecedarian Approach Part 2 of a two-day course facilitated by Michelle REBER
- Annual CPR Training with First Aid Assist
- Australian Code of Ethics Webinar
- Room Magic with Kathy Murray
- But Babies don't DO anything! Planning for our youngest Children-Professional Development held at Milford Lodge, delivered by Nike Buchan
- Educational Leaders Meeting
- Staff Catch Ups
- Department Network Meeting: Transitions

July ~ August ~ September

- Village Ways Two Day Conference at Dusty Hill
- Educational Leaders Meetings

Before School Care commencing in Term 3

After being asked so many times over the years if we would consider offering Before School Care to older siblings who attend Buderim Mountain State School we finally stopped just talking about it and decided to put our plans in motion We asked for expressions of interest and were overwhelmed by the response and requests for Afterschool Care too - this may be something we will offer in the future but we want to see how the Before School Care goes first.

Our Before School care program will commence Monday 10th July. The cost will be $10. This fee will be added to your account each week. Families who are eligible for CCB/CCR can claim this also. School bags can be dropped off outside our Library room and children have the use of the private bathroom next to the library (we understand how important these little considerations are) The children will be invited to join in with all our exciting early morning experiences before we walk them across to school. Casual bookings can be made on the day but planned days are preferable so we can staff accordingly. If you think you may use this service in the future, you can complete an enrolment form so everything will be ready to go for when you need it.

I think it will be really nice for the younger siblings at Milford to be able to walk across with them each day too. We hope this makes life a little easier for our families and are really excited about spending time with the children who have left us to attend school. We now won't be so sad at the end of the year knowing we will continue to see many of our little friends again on a regular basis.

TERM 2 Happy Snaps