



Alpine Green Gums

*...from little things
big things grow....*



..And From little things big things DO happen!

After winning the RESPECT Award in 2010 (Recognition of Excellent Sustainable Practice in Early Childhood Teaching) from Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC Vic Inc.) our GREEN TEAM is more focused than ever.

In this issue we will reflect on our latest achievements, share our staff and centre's 'green' shifts and provide you with some activities you can do with your children at home.

We meet on a Thursday morning each month to get our initiatives off the ground. If you are interested in this area and would like to be involved, please let one of our green team know. We thank all staff and parents for your support.

Meet the team. Top left to right: Susan Anehagen, Paula Miotto, Heather Tottenham, Jean Doodeward. Middle picture: Jenny Kromar, Catherine Dondio and the bottom picture is of Donna Coggins.

We are taking sustainability seriously

1. Congratulation goes to our sustainability officer Donna Coggins at Lake View Children's Centre in Mt Beauty who last year successfully completed her **Diploma of Sustainability** from Swinburne University. Donna, along with our other sustainability officers will be visiting all our services in 2011 delivering fun, education sessions to children.
2. Jenny Kromar and Susan Anehagen presented at the 2011 *Early Childhood Education Conference – Together we grow* held in Melbourne on 4 June. Participants from Victoria and interstate gathered to listen to inspiring speakers and network with other people in the early childhood sector. Their presentation was on our journey to date and offering practical suggestions on how organisations can set up small, medium and large green initiatives.
3. Installation of a **WASHING LINE** at Lyndhurst Children's Centre last October has meant a huge drop in energy use of the clothes dryer. Normally the clothes dryer get used 2-3 cycles per day for clothes, bibs, face washers. A sincere thanks to staff for their acceptance in behavioural change in this area.
4. Last year we conducted energy audits at each of our centres to identify where possible action could be undertaken to reduce energy consumption. The audit was completed for free by assessor Paul Hartley after ACS managed to secure over **38 households** across the Alpine Shire to participate in the free **home energy efficiency audit**. Thank you all families that participated! Please let us know what changes you have made to your home.

Parent's survey responses for 2010

In 2010 we conducted on-line parent surveys across all of our center's. The survey aimed to obtain parents thoughts on key areas of the service including: Programs and learning; Partnerships with families; Quality assessment; Sustainability; Website / communication and General. Here is a snapshot of the results in our **sustainability** area:-

- 77.8% of parents were aware that their child's centre has an ongoing commitment to green initiatives, such as worm farms, composting and recycling.
- Over 50 supportive comments from parents including:-

Fantastic, something we have at home and find very important.

Great idea I think kids should be aware of these things at a young age..... chooks next!

Couldn't love it more!!

You can never start teaching children too early about green initiatives. It promotes green initiatives at home and the older children would love showing parents what they have learnt.

- 25.9% of parents said **that they have implemented changes in their home from as a result of your child's education in this area. Here are some parents comments to their change:**

We have always recycled, but we are now getting our children more involved at home. We have started a vegetable patch at home, so we are now looking at getting a worm farm and are wanting to do composting as well. It has been a great discussion point at home.

Already recycle, but will be planting first veggie garden this year.

More aware of the appliances being on and composting

the children are involved with the planning and preparation with us.

Water Education

Diane Doyle from North East Water delivered water education sessions last November to all centre's. The children were captivated by Diane's sessions which had them learning, laughing and singing about water drop 'whizzy'. Here is a summary of what was covered:

- how much water is in the world
- visualizing how much water is on earth and where
- 'whizzy' big book water cycle story
- why do we use water
- household water use - how to save water
- story book "The Waterhole"
- Singing
- A colouring/drawing sheet can be used about brushing teeth with the tap off or their own depiction of saving water.

Diane will be back this year.



CERES - a model for a sustainable and innovative future for our kids

CERES - Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, is an award winning, not-for-profit, environment and education centre and urban farm located by the Merri Creek in East Brunswick, Melbourne. Over 300,000 people visit CERES each year. CERES is recognised as an international leader in community and environmental practice.

Alpine Children's Services had the pleasure of a visit from Anthony Mangelsdorf to our Mountain View Centre in September of 2010. Anthony is the Senior Sustainability Facilitator for the Barwon Region and also for the Bogong outdoor Education Centre. Anthony was very impressed by what we have done so far and gave us some great tips and information to help us continue our sustainability program.

Mountain View receive solar grant



Mountain View was successful in its submission for funding for SOLAR PANELS to assist the Centre with the capital works necessary to reduce energy consumption for long term. As 72% of energy consumption is for heating/cooling, we propose to install solar electricity panels to significantly reduce this figure and our green house emissions.

As part of the AuSSI Vic program we have been working through the energy module at each of our centres. One of the requirements was to conduct an energy audit to identify where possible action could be undertaken to reduce energy consumption. The audit was completed for free by assessor Paul Hartley after ACS managed to secure over 38 households across the Alpine Shire to participate in the free home energy efficiency audit.

Fingers crossed...another grant in the pipe works.

ACS was invited to put in a joint application with Knox City Council (suburban partner) and the City of Melbourne (city based partner) and ACS (regional partner) for the project - Sustainability in the Early Years Funding Round - Partnership Grants 2010 through Sustainability Victoria. If successful we will become the regional pilot. The project will take 2 years and ACS will receive tonnes of specialist support in implementing environmental practices into our services. The application was submitted at the end of 2010 and we await the outcome in the next few months.

P.S Knox City Council take environmental education in the early childhood so seriously that they even have a person employed in their local council as the Early Years Sustainability Officer! Times are changing.

OUR BOOK PICK



This popular children's book by author Lauren Child provides a humorous introduction to the importance of recycling and the ways kids can help. At the back of the book there is a removable tree counter poster with leaves your children can cut out and attach each time they collect something to recycle.

Ride to Walk Week

Thanks to all who participated in this great event - there were certainly lots of hungry kids tucking into fresh fruit and pancakes after a ride or walk to



Lifeview Mum Lisa Drew with daughter

The world needs your inspiration!

We are compiling a database from all around the world of ways in which different people are reusing discarded and salvaged materials and reducing landfill. These ideas are being converted into a comprehensive book "retrash" which will categorically list all of the different materials that have been given a second life and turned into something of value.

<http://www.retrash.com/>

Staff Book Swapping....expands!

Did you know.... that staff at Lyndhurst have been sharing and caring (and helping the environment) by swapping books and magazines for the past 4 years. Taking a leaf out of their book all centres now have set up a dedicated spot in the foyer where families can donate, swap and share books. Happy reading! Happy sharing!

SCRUB
australia

handcrafted plantable stationery

Surprise someone special with a card that grows

Scrub Australia's plantable seed stationery is embedded with tiny seeds...live seeds that grow when planted.

Scrub Australia is an Australian company that focuses on producing sustainable products and who believe in people and planet before profit.

These unique cards and gift tags make a lovely gift for family and friends. Prices start from \$1.75 at the Mount Beauty Hardware & Drapery or online at <http://www.scrubaustralia.com.au>

NEW! Mobile phone/battery/ink cartridge drop off points

Did you know?

Most people buy a new phone every 2 years.

7 out of 10 people have at least one old unused mobile phone at home, nearly 4 out of 10 have at least 2 or more old unused mobile phones at home that could be recycled

Mobile phones are not biodegradable and contain small amounts of potentially hazardous substances such as cadmium in NiCad batteries which if not managed properly can be harm the environment

By recycling mobile phones, more than 90% of the mobile phone product materials can be extracted and reused such as plastics, gold, silver, copper and nickel.

One tonne of mobile phone circuits can yield the same amount of precious metals as 110 tonnes of gold ore, 123 tonnes of silver bearing ore and 11 tonnes of copper sulphide ore.

All mobiles collected by MobileMuster are dismantled, sorted and separated into circuit boards, batteries, handsets and accessories, no item is re-used or re-sold. These are then processed either locally or overseas for resource recovery. MobileMuster is a not for profit organisation which has been established and funded by the telecommunications industry to stop old handsets from becoming landfill and to reduce the demand on the planets valuable resources.

YOUR CENTRE NOW HAS MOBILE/BATTERY/INK CARTRIDGE BOXES - FOR YOUR CONVIENCE.

Meet our Polar Bears!

Each centre has a new mascot and the children have named the bear. The polar bear helps around the centre, switching off lights, hanging up the clothes and making sure all future events are waste-free events. They go home with staff and families and get up to all sorts of environmental adventures. At Lakeview they have 'Envo', Mountain View have 'Nanook' and at Lyndhurst they have 'Scraps'. This issue, lets introduce Nanook from Mountain View:

We decided to name our Polar Bear Nanook as that's what he is called by Eskimos in their own language and because we need to protect our planet from Global warming so that the ice where they live doesn't keep melting.

Nanook is loved by our kids here at Mountain View and has already been in our local paper. In Inuit mythology, Nanook or Nanuq which is from the Inuit language for polar bear, was the master of bears, meaning he decided if hunters had followed all applicable taboos and if they deserved success in hunting bears. The Inuit language is traditionally spoken across the North American Arctic by Eskimo's.



Kinder kids gain sustainable ideas

■ 'Green' principles which can be used in the home

ENVO the Planet Patroller, a cuddly soft polar bear, is helping the children at Lake View Children's Centre to learn environmental lessons.

Each week he goes home with a family, where he is photographed turning off lights, composting vegetable scraps, saving water and other simple activities to remind small children that they too can help keep our world sustainable.

The photos and stories are later shared and discussed by the children and their teachers.

Donna Coggins, the centre's sustainability officer, said that Alpine Children's Services was working with Sustainability Victoria to become the first centre in regional Victoria to be certified as a sustainable Early Childhood Service.

The centre not only encourages green practices among its families, but models them in its own day-to-day habits.

Lake View has a vegetable garden complete



ON PATROL: This week Axel and Saskia Mero are having their turn at taking Envo the Planet Patroller home to help them learn how to live cleaner and greener lives.

with worm farm and compost bin, it uses rain water tanks, uses recycled objects for craft activities and where possible purchases recycled products for its daily use.

The children are taught about endangered species and care for the environment as part of their education program.

"It is all to do with becoming more sustainable

child care centres across the shire," Ms Coggins said.

"We want children to become more aware that saving energy and resources is important."



2nd April 2011

Nanook went to Julie's house for a sleepover on the weekend. He helped Julie to do some cooking then put the foodscraps into a bucket to feed Julie's mums chickens. Then he helped to recycle some cardboard and some old papers.

(Julie staff)



Mother's Day - A sensational gift that grows

The children at the Bright & District Kindergarten children spoiled their mum's this year with small potted flowers and the children at Lake View Children's Centre lovingly gave their mothers potted plants. We hope all you mum's enjoy watching them grow.

Activities you can do at home

Make your own water bottles for the garden.

Using an empty milk bottle (remove label and clean), pierce top of bottle with about 20 small holes. Cut out letters of your child's name from a magazine and cover the name with sticky tape to make it waterproof.

Make your own NO JUNK MAIL sign.

Get your kids to help colour-in your NO JUNK MAIL sign and get them to stick it on the letterbox. This is a good chance to explain about reducing advertising paper.

Competition - Dress as a water hero!

As part of National Water Week, North East Water are running a super hero fun competition for kids. Entrants need to be 0-5 years and not attending primary school. Details: Dress up as a water hero using commonly found household object to do with water. Send in a photo. Three winners will be chosen. Winners will receive a bag of water related goodies and a medallion. Competitions close 19 August 2011. Contact Diane Doyle, Education Officer, North East Water - (02) 6022 0580 or

email: didoyle@nerwa.vic.gov.au

