

Oamaru Kindergarten Association Pānui

Holmes Kindergarten goes 12 months

Holmes Kindergarten, under new head teacher Mel Read, has recently moved to delivering an all-year programme. Mel Read talked about the changes at Holmes and how this new service will be implemented.

"Becoming an all-year kindergarten, means that we will have a more seamless programme. We will be able to support our community as we will not be closing during term breaks as we have done previously. However, we will be closed for the two-week period over Christmas," said Mel.

The changes will mean an increase in staff and the number of tamariki attending Holmes.

"We will be increasing our number of tamariki from 30 to 39," Mel says. "Firstly, this is going to support those already enrolled by being able to support attendance for them on more days and after this change, we will then be opened to the community.

Holmes Hill is a growing area of Oamaru and when asked about the reasons for the new

changes, Mel said: "As communities grow and change, we believe that it is important that the service we offer adapts alongside it and continues to meet the needs of our current and potential whānau."

Staff numbers have also changed.

"We have moved from being a team of four Kaiako to five. We have recruited and placed who we believe will be the right fit for our team. Our new Kaiako is expected to start in October."

Mel Read is a new appointment in the role of Head Teacher at Holmes and commented on her new role.

"I am new to the head teacher role (at Holmes). I have really enjoyed getting to know the whānau and tamariki community at Holmes Kindergarten and feel I am very much part of this community."



New OKA Board Member



Christy Townsend has recently been appointed to the OKA Board. Christy introduces herself and outlines her hopes for the future.

"My name is Christy Townsend, I was born in Oamaru and grew up rurally in Duntroon. I am married to Richard, and we have three young boys aged seven, five and three years. We own an electrical business which is run from home in Weston.

"Our three sons have attended Holmes Kindergarten and we have watched them thrive and in the case of the two oldest, transition easily to school. With our youngest son still attending Holmes and two at school, life is a little easier and I thought this would be a good opportunity to give back to OKA after using their services for the past few years.

"For a number of years, I have been part of the Holmes Kindergarten fundraising team and the Weston Home and School. I like to be involved and help where I can and am not afraid of hard work. I am a very practical person who does what I say I am going to do.

Christy's new role will bring an increased focus on her belief in little people having the best start and opportunities.

"I will really push for that. I work well with others and I am not afraid to ask questions if I need to know more. I would love to see as many families as possible being able to access this amazing service. Having never attended kindly myself as a kid, I was totally impressed by the kindy experience and the opportunities it has given my family.

"I want to be part of the team that helps future proof this amazing service for many more years to come in North Otago."

Heirloom Tapestry returns to original custodians

An original wall hanging commissioned in 1978 from the North Otago Embroiderers' Guild and destined to hang at Edna McCulloch Kindergarten has "come home" to its original custodians, Oamaru Kindergarten Association.

The embroidered panel, which originally hung on a large piece of dressed wood, has a white calico backing and orange fabric edging. It originally hung at Edna McCulloch before the site was redeveloped.

The appliqued design on the panel features a blue sky with a large smiling sun, a large tree with butterflies, an owl, parrots and a large brown spider. Other animals featured on the panel include a giraffe, squirrels, snails, rabbits and sheep.

Written on the back of the panel is the inscription: "Presented to the Edna McCulloch Kindergarten by the North Otago Embroiderers' Guild, April 1978".

The panel which had been safely stored at the Waitaki Museum for a number of years after it was removed from Edna McCulloch, has been placed on long-term loan with OKA where it will be displayed in a special glass case.

Julie Craig acknowledged the support of Director Waitaki Museum and Archives and Forester Gallery Chloe Searle who made the move of the archive to the OKA offices possible.

"We are just thrilled to see a part of the OKA heritage back home with us and I want to say a big "thank you" to Chloe Searle for making this possible."



Grant gets wet weather gear for Maheno

The grant of \$1000 from Network Waitaki has meant wet weather protection for tamariki attending Maheno Kindergarten.

Head Teacher at Maheno Karen McCutcheon said the grant had enabled sufficient wet weather gear to be purchased for all the children who attend the facility.

"Most of our children attend for the full day," she said. "They are used to being outdoors and tamariki need access to the outdoors.

"There is so much learning that happens outside no matter what the weather.," Karen said. "And, to be fair, who doesn't love to jump in puddles!"

Maheno Kindergarten is running to capacity and currently, there are no more places available this year.

"Our waiting list is fairly substantial but, once children start to head off to school, places become available on a regular basis," said Karen.



Network Waitaki
Powering North Otago

"A huge thank you to Network Waitaki for their ongoing support to the Kindergartens and the Association. Without their support we would not have been able to purchase the clothing and boots."

Early Kindergarten days recalled

A recent meeting between OKA Life Member Lyndsay Gilchrist and General Manager Julie Craig saw many memories of the early days at McCulloch Kindergarten being recalled.

Mrs Gilchrist (nee Craig), taught at McCulloch for two years approximately 64 years ago and now lives in Ranfurly.

Raised on a farm at Poolburn, Mrs Gilchrist said she always wanted to be a Kindergarten teacher. During her two years at McCulloch, she met several of the ladies who had been instrumental in the formation of the Oamaru Kindergarten Association, including founder and Kindergarten namesake Edna McCulloch, Hilda Gardiner and former Waitaki Mayoress Valerie Laney.

"Her memories of the early days of McCulloch were informative and very interesting," Julie Craig said.

Marriage and a move away from Oamaru signalled the end of Mrs Gilchrist's kindergarten career (in those days, married women did not teach at kindergartens), and in recognition of her service, she was presented with a very attractive Bavarian tea set which



is displayed at her home along with several exquisite examples of her quilting work.