



OMEP AUSTRALIA World organisation for Early Childhood Education

Organisation Mondiale pour l'Éducation Pré-scolaire
World Organisation for Early Childhood Education
Organización Mundial para la Educación Preescolar

National Newsletter

March 2008

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PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS TREVOR FEDER

This is the first newsletter for 2008 and we trust it is timely in arrival to you. Unfortunately the last 2007 newsletter was late due to technological problems resulting from upgrading of computers and loss of completed files which were ready for submission to the printer. By the time these difficulties were rectified the situation had compounded with the Christmas holiday period and business closedowns. We hope we do not experience such problems again as they caused much angst for the editors and of course the delay in printing and posting.

Already 2008 has been a moving year with the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivering the apology to the Stolen Generations. While the public and politicians continue to argue over the meaning and wording of the apology, for members of the Stolen Generations it was a symbolic event, signifying the first step in the healing process. This event was a poignant and timely reminder of the importance and need for organisations such as OMEP to continue working for all children and especially young children who are suffering disadvantage or are in vulnerable situations.

The 7th OMEP Hong Kong International Conference *Catalysts for Changes in Early Childhood Practices*, (May 22-24, 2008) is fast approaching; it is pleasing that Professor Wendy Schiller (University of South Australia) a long standing OMEP Australia member will deliver a keynote address on the theme of Health, Child Development and Current Research. This conference is an opportunity for regional members to gather and contribute current information and share pertinent research and we look forward to hearing about the experiences of any members who attend.

OMEP Australia has also put forward two applications to present at the Early Childhood Australia National Conference to be held in Canberra 3-6 October 2008. Both are related to raising awareness about OMEP; one is a proposal for a dinner hosted by OMEP Australia to be arranged for delegates attending the conference. Attendance would be optional and the gathering would provide an opportunity for OMEP Australia to share information about projects undertaken and the ways these support children socially and emotionally; the second is a proposal for a poster presentation giving a brief historical overview of OMEP International and OMEP Australia and portraying how OMEP Australia operates with reference to past and present achievements and future aspirations. March 31, 2008 is the date by which acceptance or rejection notification of the applications will be received.

Work with the OMEP Australia: New Constitution continues and a further draft with amendments has been received from the lawyers and is currently being considered by Board Members. As discussions progress we will keep you informed.

I am sure you will have noticed a change in the back pages of the news letter as they now provide opportunity and space for members to make individual contributions; so if you have exciting, interesting pertinent experiences or information to share with other members you should make your contribution to subsequent newsletters. If you wish to take this opportunity please email any contributions to newsletter editor anne.carrington@unisa.edu.au

I wish you well for the remainder of 2008 as you fulfil your role as an OMEP Australia member.

WORKING FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

CHILDREN ON THE AGENDA IN NSW

At the encouragement of the Secretariat, our NSW contribution shares some of the conferences, seminars and forums that are being held in our state to inspire early childhood professionals, to examine issues, and to inform policy makers in anticipation of ongoing changes to the field in 2008 and beyond.

Deb Curtis and Margie Carter (USA) invite you to explore possibilities for deeper engagement in the teaching and learning process.

- + consider the distinction between working as a technician and a reflective practitioner
 - + practice a protocol for analyzing observations and documentation to take action
 - + know your values and perspectives and how they impact your work
 - + find the details that engage your heart and mind
 - + seek the child's point of view to inform your actions
- collaborate with others to expand perspectives.

Quality Care for Our Children – Their basic right (24/1 Sydney)

Dr. Margaret Sims, Child & Family Studies, Edith Cowan University child care setting, Dr. Sims speaks to the processes and structural elements in the child care environment that are necessary to ensure children get the quality care they deserve as a basic right.

Giving ALL Children a Chance to Achieve — Best practice that leads to lasting benefits (27/5 Sydney)

Dr. Iram Siraj-Blatchford, Professor Early Childhood Education, University of London Drawing on the findings of EPPE, a study that has followed 3000 children for the last 10 years to look at the long-term impact of pre-school settings, Iram will describe the processes and practices which lead to good child outcomes for social, behavioural and intellectual development for children 3-5 and will describe the kinds of best practice which leads to lasting benefits to age 11.

These opportunities have been produced by a variety of partnerships and associations between many organisations here in NSW: Lady Gowrie Child Centre, NIFTeY, NSW Commission for Children & Youth, Children & Families Research Centre (Macquarie University), Country Children's Services Association NSW, KU Children's Services, SDN, Uniting Care Burnside, Social Justice in Early Childhood Group, Community Child Care, Semann & Slattery & Baby Action Group

See details of these opportunities on
Pages 6 and 7

NEWS FROM VICTORIA

Planning for 2008 is well underway with a variety of social and fund raising activities to be put into the calendar for the year.

The dinner in September will be a highlight with a very interesting dinner speaker who will be in Victoria at the time of the dinner. Topics that might be covered include children with aggression and behaviour problems, or parents who are very high risk because of complex traumas they have faced or which probably is the most relevant hearing about evaluations of community based intervention programs. The night will be very exciting and details will be released as they become available. If you have not yet put the date in your dairy, please do so now and start collecting friends to join you.

The care bag project will be happening over the next few months. The bags have been described as an absolute godsend by the carers who have been using them. The plan is to provide another Anglicare region with high needs with a set of bags but sometimes phone tags can be very frustrating but it is underway. Members can canvas friends and neighbours for undies, nappies, toothbrushes, crayons, scrap books, hair brushes, combs and the like.

Thursday March 27th is the date for high tea and chat. To be confirmed

but we are planning a visit to the Conservatory in the Fitzroy Gardens followed by afternoon tea at the Hilton. You will receive a flyer with all the details via email or snail mail

Several of our members are travelling the high seas by cruise ship and there will be an opportunity for those of us left behind to hear details of food, wine, captain's table adventures when they all return sometime in April

Julie from Robinvale has agreed when next in Melbourne to talk with us about the Robinvale project and the impact it has had for children and families. We are working through the possibility of having a high profile member of the Federal Government talk at the same time. We will keep you all posted.

For sale: if you have not yet purchased a copy of " Sowing the Seeds of Peace" by Joan Waters and would like to do so, fill in the form and send to Ross House and your copy will be forwarded to you. Please include cheque or postal note with your order.

Shayne Collins.
Victorian Director
You can contact me at meriella@netlink.com.au for further information about Victoria.

"For sale: if you have not yet purchased a copy of " Sowing the Seeds of Peace" by Joan Waters and would like to do so, fill in the form and send to Ross House "



ORDER FORM

Please send me.....copies of Sowing Seeds of Peace @\$20 each (includes p&p)

NAME:.....

ADDRESS.....

..... POSTCODE.....

return to OMEP AUSTRALIA
Ross House, 247 -251 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CHAPTER REPORT

Popondetta Feast

On a balmy evening in December, members met in the beautiful poolside gardens of the Elsegood residence for a Papua New Guinea-style feast of barbecue pork and fish, chicken claypot, sticky rice, sweet potato, pumpkin, exotic salads and tropical fruits, washed down with copious quantities of WA wines. A lucky-dip raffle put smiles on the faces of guests as they walked away with PNG artefacts, hand-crafts, wine or toiletries, while at the same time raising \$400 for our flood-stricken friends in PNG..

School Starter Kits

Eight executive members met at the home of our project officer Pauline Starkey to package 300 school starter kits for needy children commencing Year 1 of primary school. Kits bound for rural and remote areas were sent by the Education Department of Western Australia, while those bound for the Perth metropolitan area were hand-delivered to schools by the executive members in the week prior to the commencement of school. This is the twelfth year that WA has con-

ducted this collaborative project which is made possible by the generosity of our members, along with various WA businesses. The library bags were donated by the Swan River Trust, while the school materials were donated by Wooldridge Educational Suppliers and the reading books by Ashton Scholastics. Without the hard work and generosity of all those involved, this project, costing around \$8,000, would not be possible.

Incorporation and au revoir

WA has been successful in its application for incorporation. We are pleased to announce that as from January 22, 2008, WA is a legally constituted association known as OMEP WA inc. This means that we are able to continue to operate as we have done in the past, whilst still cooperating fully through affiliation with OMEP (Aust) Ltd and through subvention with the world body.

On Thursday evening, members met at the Butterworth residence to toast our success. It was also an opportunity to farewell two executive members (Lis and Paul Mathiasen) who are returning to the Gibson Desert to take up appointments as Principal and Registrar respectively of Tjukurla Remote Aboriginal School. We pledged our support to Lis and Paul in this challenging assignment and we look forward to receiving regular updates from them.

Dr Dawn Butterworth.



L to R: Mary Vajda, Tina Elsegood, Lis and Paul Mathiasen celebrating incorporation.



Dawn Butterworth delivering school starter kits at a local primary school.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NEWS

The chapter concluded 2007 with a cheery shared meal around a large festive table in December. We had planned to share ideas for 2008, but somehow catching up and reflecting a little on the last year, seemed to take precedence.

The same thing happened the year before, so perhaps members do need an occasional opportunity to just enjoy an evening together!

Our 2007 "Goats for the Children of the World" project just grew and grew. We have recently received some additional contributions, taking the number of goats purchased for families in Sri Lanka to exactly 148, enough to help out in several villages. We have received ecstatic thanks from our colleagues in Oxfam. They were especially moved by knowing that children, staff and families from 30 different schools and children's centres around the state had helped to make this possible. We are also grateful to friends in ECA, the Pre-School Directors Association and the Children's Week Committee, who generously help us with publicity.

The Children's Week Committees around Australia, usually instigate projects which highlight the designated United Nations year. This is The Year of the Potato, The Year of Sanitation and The Year of Planet Earth, along with several others....so it is possible to choose almost anything! OMEP SA is hoping to develop a project relating to the indigenous community and another around clean water, the lack of clean water and sanitation still being the principal cause of child mortality in the developing world.

For anyone interested in activity relating to the Year of the Potato, Global Education in Adelaide, has produced an imaginative handbook for teachers, which is already into its second printing.

Good wishes to all in OMEP for 2008, **Merilyn Webb**

Re ECA CONFERENCE CANBERRA -October 2008

OMEP Australia proposes that an International dinner be arranged for delegates attending the conference to be hosted by OMEP Aust. Attendance is optional. The dinner will provide an opportunity for delegates in an informal social setting, to explore opportunities for brainstorming ways to improve the social and emotional well being of children both in Australia and overseas. OMEP Australia will share projects undertaken that support children socially and emotionally.

A relaxed dinner, meeting and sharing with friends, also allows delegates an opportunity to relax and talk through common issues that arise throughout the conference. The dinner can provide emotional release that cannot always happen at the end of a particular seminar or debate.

The menu would be smorgasbord with variety of dishes from Asia Pacific region which is our local OMEP International region. An evening of music, good food and great fellowship!

.....

For OMEP Aust this would be marketing and a chance to spread the word

Perhaps we need to include some historical stuff – re establish the dinner within ECA conference.

YOUR RESPONSES PLEASE

Deb Curtis

and

Margie Carter

Learning Together with Young

Children:

A framework for reflective teaching

Learning Together
with Young Children

A Curriculum Framework for Reflective Teachers



Deb Curtis and Margie Carter

Wagga Wagga

5 March 2008,
Wednesday

9:30am-3:30pm

General \$105, Student
\$75

Sydney CBD

7 March 2008, Friday (or)

8 March 2008, Saturday

9:30am-3:30pm

General \$165, Student
\$110



"Margie and Deb have taken on and succeeded in the onerous task of translating the complexities of child-centered teaching into a call for action."

**John Nimmo, Co-author
Emergent Curriculum**

Deb and Margie believe teaching young children is an art, not a bag of tricks. How do we negotiate our adult perspectives and desired outcomes with children's points of view and their innate appetite for investigating the world? What pedagogy will keep teachers learning side by side with children?

Offering a "thinking lens" from their new book, Deb and Margie invite you to explore possibilities for deeper engagement in the teaching and learning process.

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Who should come?

everyone in the early childhood sector
those working in quality assurance and regulation
early childhood students.

Deb Curtis and Margie Carter (USA) have written six books together. Through Harvest Resources, their training and consulting business, they work with early childhood teachers around the world. Deb has worked in Head Start and children's services for thirty years. She currently works as a child care teacher at the Burlington Little School in Burlington, Washington. Margie has been a preschool and kindergarten teacher and a child care director for fourteen years. She writes regular columns in Child Care information Exchange and is the producer of several staff training videos.

Presented by
Lady Gowrie Child Centre, Sydney

Book NOW! Limited places. Sold out in past years.

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OMEP Australia is a non profit, non government, community based organisation. Established here in 1969, it is the sole representative in Australia of Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire (OMEP) which means the World Organisation for Pre-school Education.

OMEP was founded in 1948 to benefit children under 8 years of age throughout the world. It is dedicated to the enhancement of all areas of children's well being, growth and development from health, education and welfare perspectives

As an advocate for children, OMEP actively raises awareness of the impact of harmful behaviours on children and their families.

OMEP is represented in over 60 countries and cooperates with other international organisations with similar aims such as UNICEF and UNESCO.

www.omepaustralia.com.au



Please Note

Both the State Chapter reports and individual contributions to the Back Pages section of the Newsletter reflect the diversity of events and concerns across Australia. It is recognised that the views these represent are not necessarily shared by all OMEP members; they are included in the spirit of mutual respect.

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OR

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