

# Flemington Co-op

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Dear Reader

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2017. Thanks for taking the time to have a read. Wrapping up a great year – Thank you everyone.

We welcome your feedback, ideas and involvement to help us continue to build on our rich history, and continue to improve our services to families, to children, and to the community.

## Board news

Last month we held our Annual General Meeting at Co-op. Thank you to all of you who attended our AGM. Attached to the newsletter this month are the annual reports from Narelle and Daniela for those of you who didn't pick up a full annual report. These are available in our foyer.

We are pleased to introduce you to our board for 2018.

Narelle Crabbe (Maija & Sylvie's Mum)  
Melissah Broadbent (Angus & Ethan's Mum)  
Melissa Wheeler (Archer & Felix's Mum)  
Sarah Strapps (Sebastian's Mum)  
Jessica To (Alexander's Mum)  
Elska Sandor (Izzy & Agnes' Mum)  
Claudia Perkins (Wren & Elke's Mum)



## Upcoming Events

### Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

Co-op closes @ 6pm for the Christmas period.

### Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Co-op opens for 2018 @ 7.30am

### Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Australia Day Public Holiday – Co-op will be closed.

### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018

Welcome back BBQ, 6.15pm @ Co-op.

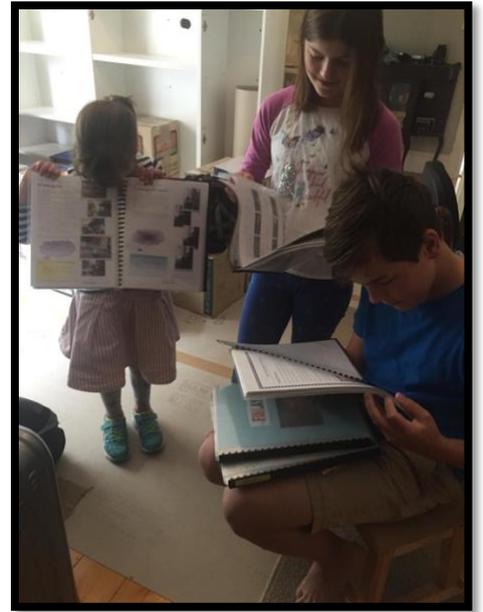




underwritten by our National Curriculum, summarising the year's worth of learning.

These portfolios are how we chose to share some of your child's learning with you in way which you can keep and revisit with your child over the years.

Throughout the year the children often have a look at what they have been doing in recent months, and it's always great to see what families do with them at home. Ours live on our bookshelf, however I had one family scan theirs in and create a photo book and last month another family sent me this photo – The Townsend's attended Co-op from 2006 – 2015.



We thought that the end of the year would also be a good time to share with you how Ty is getting along in New Zealand. Ty is working with a family in Auckland looking after 4 children. Recently he won an award recognizing his documentation of children's learning and we are really proud of him. Here are a few snaps of him with the youngest two children.



## Team placements for 2018.

In finalising 2018 there will be some movement amongst the educator's in the children's rooms. We are fortunate to have a small team where all team members knows each of the children, however we do try and ensure that children have a familiar educator in the room they will be in. It is important for my team to have some movement around the centre to keep their professional learning current across all age groups and to ensure burnout doesn't occur.

For 2018 the teams will be as follows:

Poppies Room: Kausser, Kate, Jodie & Melanie. (Yuko will also begin the year in this room).

Snapdragon Room: Mitsilal, Camila (Lan will also be a team member in this room from Jan – approx. April due to children's ages & ratios)

Kinder Room: Chris

Centre Support Team: Joolee, Fatuma, & Yuko

Casual Team: Hanna, Melony & Ralia

Thank you to everyone who came and celebrated the Christmas Party with us last Thursday. Although there may have been more rain Thursday night than there was planned for last weekend, the night was a little noisy but very successful. Thank you to Troy for again cooking the sausage sizzle, to my team for helping organize the evening & to Santa for his 12<sup>th</sup> year. It's a tough gig in that red suit.

Families will not be charged for the holiday period that Co-op is closed – Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December, through to Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018. Fees will commence on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2018 for all children.

We have many new families joining us at Co-op in 2018 and we look forward to meeting everyone in the new year. Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February will be the night that we have our official welcome back BBQ at Co-op so pencil that in your diary now.

Saturday night we had our team Christmas Party at the Ascot Lot – what a fun night out that was. Thanks to my team for a brilliant 2017.

Lastly, I would like to wish you all a happy and safe festive season. 2017 has been a brilliant year for Co-op and we are excited to see what 2018 has in store for us.



## **NARELLE'S CHAIRPERSON ANNUAL REPORT**

Thanks everyone for coming tonight as we meet for the AGM for both 2016 and 2017.

The 2016 AGM was postponed for a couple of reasons. One being Daniela's health that wasn't so good for a large portion of last year, and the other was that there was a huge delay with the auditor, and in fact we then moved to a new auditor, so by the time we received figures for 2016, it was decided by the Board to roll both reports into one for more efficiency.

### **So a bit of recap on the last couple of years....**

**2016** started with a BBQ at co-op to welcome new families and get together as a community. There were lots of new families including plenty of young babies settling into the centre.

We thought the renovation would've been complete by early 2016, but there have been numerous reasons this hasn't happened, which I'll get to further in a moment.

We held a cake stall the day before Mother's Day at Newmarket train station and had a fun trivia night in June, both to help fundraise for co-op. We are a small co-op with only about 50 families so we rely on your continued support and involvement in things like the fundraising to keep ourselves going. Thank you to all of you for your delicious baking efforts and for your participation in the trivia night shenanigans. These nights are always a lot of fun and a great way to gather as a group.

Other fundraising efforts in 2016 were the Bunning's sausage sizzle, the tea towels, picture plates, tote bags and Christmas trees. Thank you to all that helped at Bunnings and for your support purchasing these other items. Thanks too for Beck for doing the artwork on our tote bags and for Elska in organising these.

Chris and Daniela held a kinder information night to give us a bit of an insight into the programs and learning that goes on in the kinder room.

We celebrated 10 years of service from both Daniela and Joo Lee in 2016, so a great achievement by both of you, thank you.

The staff participated in a health challenge in September 2016 where they committed to walking 10 000 steps a day, which was a great initiative.

We completed 2016 with a great Christmas picnic at Farnham street park, the kinder kids had a celebration dinner to end their co-op years and the staff gathered at Daniela's for a lovely end to 2016.

**2017** started similarly to 2016 with another Welcome BBQ here at co-op.

Again we thought that the renovation would've been finally completed after a long 10 years in process.

There has been a couple of significant reasons the build hasn't been completed and was delayed for such extended periods of time.

One of those, was regarding the builders themselves. We had difficulty getting them to return on site to complete works on multiple areas, and in fact some of these still aren't done. In the time that they were doing our build, the company dissolved and it's members parted ways and we have now finally been able to terminate our contract with them just recently.

We also had difficulty with a building appeal from some neighbours that delayed the build by 2 years and cost us considerable financial expense at the Building Appeals Board. And to note that co-op's build was found to be all fine to go ahead and continue. I.e. The Building Appeals Board awarded in our favour – though our funds from this process were not recuperated nor were we financially compensated for this delay and process.

Whilst the build has enabled us to move from a 31 space childcare to a 37 space childcare and kindergarten, due to the building delays this transition has taken a lot longer than anticipated and it has meant therefore we have been lower in

numbers in the kinder room simply because we weren't able to implement the extra spaces until the build was able to be signed off by the education department.

Although the build still isn't absolutely complete I think we can say that it's looking fabulous in comparison to where it was and with some final shelving and cabinetry to be completed we'll be looking forward to move on from all these building sagas and to a fresh start in 2018.

We received federal government funding in 2016 through the Strengthening Communities Grant that allowed us to create a beautiful and natural backyard environment this year in May. It's a great space for the kids to explore and learn in, and is a real asset to co-op.

Again this year we held another successful cake stall raising \$1200 and the trivia night raising another \$5700.

Thank you again for all your support on these, and to Claudia for putting together the questions this year. The other fundraising we did this year was to produce t-shirts for co-op. Thanks again to Beck for the amazing artwork on them and for Elska helping to organise them all. There's still more for sale if you haven't got yours yet – and also some more tote bags that are great – grab some coloured fabric markers and let your kids create their own individual bag!

Daniela celebrated her graduation from her Masters in Educational Leadership specialising in Early Childhood Education so a big congratulations to her.

We also celebrated 10 years of service by Kausser this year, which is fabulous, well done! This also gives an insight into the workplace that co-op is for our educators, that they are longer standing staff members.

Prior to the backyard development and then again more recently in October we held working bees to clean up the yards and the buildings and prepare them for the works and also the Open Day that was held at the end of last month. Thank you to all of you who came and put in all those efforts – we really do appreciate it and indeed rely on this community involvement.

It was great to have co-op Open to the wider community and to show case what co-op is really all about. It was such a successful morning showing around potential new families to the centre and allowing them to spend some time in the different spaces of co-op and to get a better insight into the philosophy of care that drives the early learning here at co-op. The work that Daniela has done on the story book highlighting these is amazing, so if you haven't checked it out, I would highly recommend it.

Thanks to all the members of the Board for all your efforts these last couple of years. You all do an amazing job.

Thank you again to Daniela for her continued and tireless work for co-op and for all the staff for their hard work. We are truly lucky to have Daniela as the director with her level of training, but to have someone who is so devoted to her team of staff and to the children and families of co-op is pretty amazing and we as part of this community are clearly reaping the benefits, so thank you.

With 2017 fast coming to an end we're set to have a pizza night at Pepper with the kinder kids to celebrate their time finishing up at co-op and the end of year co-op picnic at Farnham Street park is on again this year on Sunday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Thanks so much.

Narelle (Maija and Sylvie's mum).

## **DANIELA'S ANNUAL REPORT**

This year at Co-op has been an amazing journey for us all. With the end of the renovations in 2016 we were so keen to start 2017 with a fresh start. With green lights, ahead we started the year with a focus on Wellbeing – for everyone at Co-op.

The Federal Government over the past 3 years provided us with \$30,000 to utilise with professional development of our team. This opportunity and sum of money Co-op would never be able to achieve alone, so we decided we had to do something so very different with it. With members of our team already receiving scholarships to complete their Bachelor or Master's Degrees in Early Childhood, we opted for 5 sessions with Maree McLeod from PoPsy, a positive psychology program that focused on Wellbeing for our team, and also wellbeing in children.

In March when this program finished, it was perfect timing to engage with Jason Cunningham at The Practice and complete a program on cultural development, focusing on our why, core values and guiding principles of Co-op, all stemming from our philosophy that has held strong over 35 years at Co-op. With the creation of our Storybook to showcase our efforts, the team and I launched this book with Jason only six weeks ago – and already we can see the enormous impact it is having on us.

I am very proud of our Storybook, it tells Co-op's story – and all of it is equally as important however tonight I would like to share with you one of our Guiding Principles. In June, this year I travelled to Fiji for a business retreat – the word Ubuntu was discussed and I immediately knew in my heart that this word meant something to me – and would to Co-op.

Ubuntu is a South African term that means 'My happiness rests in your happiness' – I can only be truly happy when you are happy. At Co-op we put the needs of others first: the children in our care, our team members, and the families that form our community. Ubuntu also says that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. We are only as strong as each team member. Only by working together and supporting each other can we live up to our mission statement and our why.

Ubuntu is a reflection of our Co-op community; my team are so strong and deliver exceptional early childhood programs to our children each and every day. I would like to take this opportunity thank each and every one of them tonight. In the last 18 months, we have sadly said goodbye to some key members of our team – Elvia, Hawo & Ty. In all the years we have farewelled members, what I love the most, is they are not gone forever. They remain friends of Co-op and our team – reminding me that our relationships are strong.

Behind the scenes at Co-op we have our Board of Management who support me in every way. I am privileged to work in a centre where I live up to my own "Why" of Nurturing the future. The Board is a voluntary position, and we all know how busy lives can be. I would especially like to thank Narelle for her commitment and dedication to Co-op. She works tirelessly to support me, my team and the wider Co-op community all whilst running her own business and caring for her own children. To the other board members, thank you for each supporting me in your roles, it takes a lot of the pressure off me to have such great people around me. As Narelle mentioned earlier, my health continues to challenge me – with Trigeminal Neuralgia, and the care and understanding I have had this year I am truly grateful for. A special thank you to Victoria tonight, as she will be stepping down as we see her son, Casper head to school in 2018.

Going forward into 2018 I am excited by what it brings – With new families enrolled for the year, a waiting list for under 3's booming and word on the street about how amazing Co-op is, we are set to keep kicking goals in the Flemington community. The one challenge we face is kindergarten. For those of you who have spent time in the kinder room you will understand how important it is for your child to have a great year before they head to school.

We intentionally opted for a smaller room with only 11 children as research shows that smaller class sizes in kindergarten foster resilience, builds confidence and the calmness of the room creates a less stressful environment. These factors all support a smoother transition to school with children being mentally prepared.

My ask of you all here tonight is to tell people in our community about the hard work we put in, let families know we have kindergarten and that for 2018 we have a few places left for 4 year olds. Kindergarten placements and a high utilisation is our way forward to ensure Co-op can remain viable long into the future.

Thank you, Daniela.