



Friday Footnotes

Giant Steps Sydney
Term 1, Week 3
12 February, 2010

Dear Parents,

Our thanks everyone for coming along to the working bee! They are certainly an important event in helping to maintain the look of the school as well as the safety aspect and we are appreciative of all our parents' input: we hope you enjoy the day. Thanks especially to Ian Morris for all the effort he has put in to organising this working bee.

On a different note, our lovely maintenance fellow, David Jayne, is unable to continue working with us for a while due to a significant health problem. I know some of you have enjoyed working with David and we wish him a speedy recovery. Still on a building note, the construction work in Early Learning is very close to finish with the roof up, art room space nearly complete, renovations to the front of the building completed, however, unfortunately the doors delivered were the wrong size so this has caused a couple of days' delay. It is very close to being finished and we hope to have a completion date in the next week or two.

Regarding a couple of building and safety matters - our beautiful Moreton Bay fig tree in the playground has been trimmed, particularly around the lower horizontal branches.

During the week another one of our 1850s sewer pipes decided to totally give up on us and over the weekend we will be carrying out major work on the sewer line and fortunately the Health Department has agreed to pay for this work.

Hasbro one of our very big supporters who regularly do 'play dates' with our students and who provide us with on average six to eight thousand dollars worth of equipment each year, are moving offices and have kindly donated their office furniture to the school. We are so delighted that we have this corporate support—so go out and buy Hasbro toys such

DIARY DATES

Sunday 14 February	Parent Working Bee
Wed. 24 February	Dads Group
Thurs. 25 February	Mothers Group
Saturday 6 March	Parent Welcome & Social Night
Thursday 11 March	Giant Steps Golf Day
Friday 12 March	Friday Night Siblings
Thursday 18 March	Parent Information Night
Sat. 20 March	Senior Siblings Group
Friday 26 March	Swimming Carnival

as *Transformers*, *Star Wars*, *Toy Story*, *My Little Pony*, *Littlest Pet Shop*, and many more.

Our Integration program commences in week five of this term. The first couple of weeks are often spent with the host school, settling in to the new year, with teachers then happy to commence our Integration program. Pippa will be coordinating the program this year following the resignation of Nicole Trinca. If you have any enquiries please contact Pippa by phone or email: pippa.sweet@giantsteps.net.au.



IMAGINE—INCLUDE—INNOVATE

On another note, Associate Professor Amanda Richdale will present a workshop to parents and staff on *Sleep and Autism* at Giant Steps the last week in April and as soon as the date is confirmed we will let you know. In the next few weeks we will be sending out a survey regarding key issues around sleep that you would like answered in the workshop. Issues such as: how to get your child to sleep and how to get your child to stay asleep and other matters as well.

Our Secondary 1 students are starting a horse riding program and they went for an orienta-

tion day this week at Tall Timber Riding for Disabled. They will be travelling out there each Tuesday during terms 1 and 2 in the Giant Steps bus. We will have some more news about this exciting initiative over the coming weeks. Secondary 1 and 2 are very excited about their upcoming three day camp to Milson Island. These camps have always been very successful in the past.

Have a great weekend
Kerrie and Claire.

Thanks

Thanks to the **Mury family** for their donation of towels. They have come in very handy at 'Water World' during play lessons!

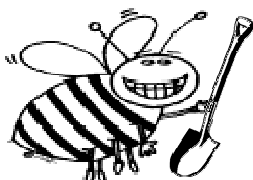
Working Bee

Just a reminder that the first working bee of the year will take place this Sunday 14th February starting at 8:30am. As always the first working bee is a busy one so we encourage anyone who is available to come along even if your name is not on the list. We will serve lunch and look forward to seeing the following families:

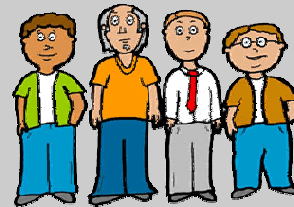
- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|
| - Bremner | - Kostaglou | - Stevens |
| - Crawford | - Levin | - Takacs |
| - Dean | - Liu | - Trayner |
| - Eastham | - Morris | - Weir |
| - Endry | - Roche | - White |
| - Geronimo | - Ryan Allan | - Witty |
| - Holland | | |

Please bring along any gardening equipment and handy tools that you might have. Please ensure that you take them home with you.

Looking forward to seeing everyone.
Michelle Jocum.



DADS' GROUP



All Giant Steps' fathers are invited to our Dads' Group which will take place this term on Wednesday 24th February. The venue will be in the Staff Room starting at 7 pm.

We'll order delivery from there so please bring along some cash money (\$20 will do) and BYO as beer and wine have never failed us before. Get ready for a good night of light talk, pure male bonding and occasionally some more serious topics.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

See you there!

Emmanuel Bourges

Please confirm your presence via e-mail at emmanuel.bourges@giantsteps.net.au

FRIDAY FOOTNOTES ON THE WEB

A reminder that past issues of Friday Footnotes are on the Giant Steps website
www.giantsteps.net.au

Click the Members Only link on the left hand sidebar. Username and password as follows:

*User name: giantsteps
Password: 23puntroad*

Mother's Group

Come along for an evening of chat, cheese and wine, and to consider the proposal for Mother's weekend away later this year.

Date:
Thursday 25th February
6:30pm onwards
Where:
GS staffroom
Bring:
Cheese, nibbles and wine to share with the group



RSVP: Helen
helen.appleton@giantsteps.net.au

PROPOSED MUMS WEEKEND AWAY!!!

WHEN:

1st Choice—Fri 17th to Sun 19th September
2nd Choice—Fri 22nd to Sun 24th October

WHERE :

T B A but within a 3 hour drive of Sydney

SUGGESTED VENUES:

1. Ferndale, Lower Portland,
2. Solar Springs, Southern Highlands,
3. Star Of The Sea, Terrigal

COST:

- (Approx)
1. \$300 H/B,
 2. \$600 F/B,
 3. \$250 S/C

Please email Tricia at triciainglis@yahoo.com to register your interest.



to Mary Koutsoukos
in Lime Class

We love hearing from our students who have graduated from Giant Steps. Here is some news from Sean.

Hi to all at Giant Steps .

Sean has settled in very well at St Edmonds although was a little disappointed on the first day when he was picked up in a car rather than a bus, he was hoping for a big bus.

His teacher is very pleased with Sean and finds him a delight to have in the classroom. He is enjoying the high school program especially the French class, he has to think more for himself which is good as it does challenge him.

Sean celebrated his 13th birthday last week where he shared a bag of treats with his classmates. He now needs to get up about 45 minutes earlier as he leaves home around 7.15 am...he is getting used to it but it was a challenge for the first few days.

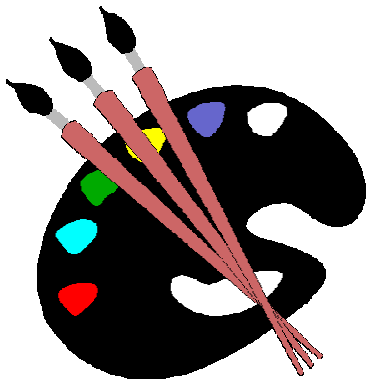
He loves his new uniform and insists on wearing his tie each day which is optional in summer...he loves his hat which he calls a top hat, as it is a bit more formal than what he was used to. See the attached photo.

We would like to thank Giant Steps for all the great work done with Sean to get him to the stage that integration at St Edmonds has so far been relatively straight forward.

*Best wishes,
Sharon ,Greg and Family*

*Please note my new email address is
sharonsweeney61@optusnet.com.au*





Art space

The new art space is up and running with all students from K-6, Secondary and the College participating in creative projects. K-6 are making art around the theme 'My World', Secondary are exploring various materials and the Community College will be making a mosaic sign for their building.



K-6



College



Secondary

Early Learning News

Early Learning has started the term with excursions to Clowntown and to Livvi's Place, the wonderful new all-abilities playground at Timbrell Park in Five Dock.

We're looking forward to welcoming our new families next week!



CLOWNTOWN



LIVVI'S PLACE





Giant Steps Sydney

Saturday, 19th June 2010

All families should have received the ball information details via email this week. If you have not received this email, please contact Leanne Maccallum on leanne-maccallum@optusnet.com.au or Ph: 9580 6213 or 0421 844 758 or ask Michelle Jocum in the office to send you home a hard copy.

The Ball is the one event of the year when **the involvement of the entire parent body is requested.**

The most important things we need your help with are PRIZES and BUMS ON SEATS. **We ask that all families assist in whatever way they can by obtaining prizes, corporate sponsorships and inviting guests. Please note the Ball Catalogue will close on 19 May this year.** This is just over 3 months away so *please* do not put the ball out of your mind until just before the catalogue closes. It can take time to put prizes together so it is a good idea to get in early with requests. Some companies allocate charity budgets at the start of the year, so the earlier you ask, the better. Also it takes a huge amount of time to process over 600+ donations of prizes and it is important to get it right so our donors are properly acknowledged and prizes are correctly described in the catalogue. It helps us a great deal if all the prizes don't come in all together just before the catalogue closes.

The email version of the invitations and the corporate sponsorship invitations will be emailed to all families next week.

The first Ball Committee meeting for this year will be held on Monday, 15 February at 7.30 pm. All families, old and new, are welcome.

The Ball Committee

College Rocks!



Surfing



Ride the waves Matty!



Happy Days!!!



Junior Siblings Day was a great success last week, with 8 youngsters braving the hideous weather to come along and play. Next week we'll have a full write up with some pictures to show how much fun was had by all!

Our Friday Night Siblings group is cancelled this week... everyone's just too busy! Justin and I are looking forward to seeing all our returning Sibsfest as well as any newbies who are turning 11 this year. Let me know if your child would like to come along so we have enough tacos for all!

The Senior group is meeting in late March, and surfing should be a great challenge for this active group. Again, let me know if your child would like to come along, there are certainly some enthusiastic staff who are interested too!

Please RSVP to book a spot- email me at helen.appleton@giantsteps.net.au or you can call me on 0404 114 347 if you have any questions.

Thanks!
Helen

Senior Siblings Group

When: Saturday 20th March 11am-5pm
Where: Meet at Giant Steps
What: Surf lesson at Manly beach!
No experience necessary, so come along for some fun!
Cost: \$30 per child
For: +6 year olds

Friday Night Siblings

When: ~~Friday 12th February 5:30-8:30pm~~
Friday 12th March 5:30-8:30pm
Where: Giant Steps
What: Dinner and games
Cost: \$10 per sibling
For: +11 year olds

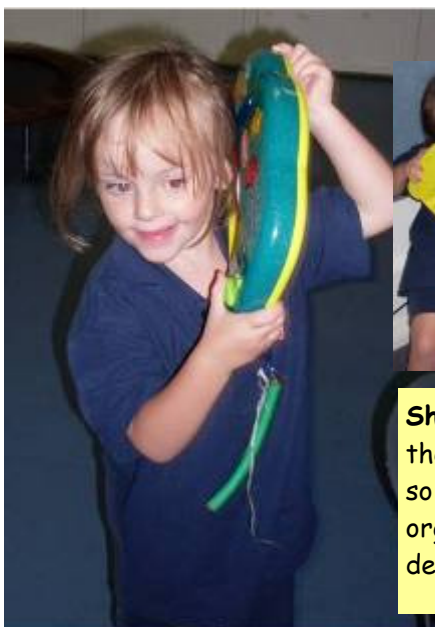
This Week's Awards—Congratulations



Mary Koutsoukos: For doing all her lessons with a big smile.



Ella Levin: For: Getting in the pool, participating in the swimming lesson and having lots of fun.



Shelby Dean: For Learning the routines of Yellow class so well that she often helps organise the staff and students.



Lachlan Weir: For playing so well with his Early learning friends.



Lily Wehbe: For her smooth transition into Yellow class.



“Breaking Point” -- Four Corners

15th February at 8.30 pm on ABC TV.

This week on Four Corners, “Breaking Point”. The heart-rending story that tells what it’s like to live with a disability, or to care for someone who is disabled, in Australia today. Reporter Wendy Carlisle meets the families the nation has neglected.

The system of assistance for people with a disability in Australia is broken. Carers know it, charitable organisations know it and so do the governments. Now the federal government says something must be done. It’s holding an Inquiry, with the intention of creating a new and fairer system. It’s even considering a national disability insurance scheme. But will the system be reformed in time to save the families now at breaking point?

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In Sydney, 65 year old Dick Jones shows his profoundly disabled son Robbie. It’s a task he does willingly but at his age he doesn’t know how long he can keep giving his son the care he needs. He’s been told the only way to get more help would be to abandon his child and leave him in the care of the state.

Amanda Royle’s 9 year old daughter Rosie is deaf and blind, cannot speak, and is intellectually disabled. On her own with two other children to look after, Amanda is in desperate need of assistance that the system cannot provide.

The Nguyen family has twin boys with severe autism. At thirteen they are intellectually disabled and need to wear nappies. Three years ago one of the twins was given a place in a special school. For the family it was a god-send. Now the funds have dried up and the school is threatened with closure.

These families are desperate and they are not alone. Across Australia it’s estimated that there are 1.5 million people with a severe disability. Only a small proportion of them receive any direct physical care from government or charities. The vast majority rely on family and friends to help them survive.

“It doesn’t matter where you look across the sector, across the states of Australia, the system is broken.” Bruce Bonyhady, Independent Panel Member, Productivity Commission Inquiry into a National Disability Support Scheme

The reasons for this situation aren’t hard to find. Thirty years ago governments radically reformed the system of disability care in Australia. They promised to set people free from institutions, and at

the same time they promised a major boost in funding so that people with disabilities could be supported to live at home or in community settings. Instead those services have been starved of funds leaving carers, many whom are now in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, to carry the burden. It’s a terrible situation as Dick Jones told Four Corners:

“We were told... the only option you have, is when you are in a wooden box , that’s probably the only time that Rob [his adult son] will get any accommodation.”

The Federal Government accepts the system needs reform and has begun to allocate extra funds for services and carers.

Most significantly, the Federal Government has set up a Productivity Commission Inquiry to recommend systematic reform and the establishment of a comprehensive National Disability Support Scheme. The problem is if the Inquiry recommends a new scheme and the Federal Government agrees to act, even the best estimates suggest real change in Australia would take five to seven years to implement.

“There’ll obviously I think be more meat on the bone for a scheme towards the end of a second term. When the scheme could finally be implemented, I don’t know.” Bill Shorten: Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities.

For thousands of people this is simply too long to wait. Four Corners reveals the growing number of people who are packing their bags and going to live in countries where the support system is better resourced. These people are being called “disability refugees”. Reporter Wendy Carlisle goes with one young mother to Britain as she investigates the possibility of moving her family back there so her daughter could be better cared for.

While the Government recognises the need for fundamental reform, many families of the disabled are at ‘breaking point’.

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BREAKING POINT goes to air on the 15th February at 8.30 pm on ABC1. It is repeated on the 16th February at 11.35pm. It will also be available online: <http://abc.net.au/4corners>

A public online forum with some of the people from the story will follow the screening on Monday night starting at 9.30pm AEDST. An invitation is extended to all to join in.
