



Friday Footnotes

Giant Steps Sydney
Term 1, Week 1
29 January, 2010

Dear Parents,

A wonderful start to the year for all our students. Welcome to our new students, Lewis Holland who started full time in K-6 and Shelby Dean and Charlie Mury who have moved up to K-6 this year and are now full time students.

College started last week with our young adults straight back into a well organized and invigorating program with a new program 'Surf Skills' at Manly Beach kicking off today.

For our school students the start was very smooth with staff meeting students with visuals in hand. This support meant that the majority of students made easy transitions to new classrooms and staff. In play lessons all students were very keen to get back into favoured activities and secondary students were quickly back into known routines.

Lots happened over the holiday period: Vacation care ran over two weeks and was very well attended by both groups. An enormous thanks to Justin Prout and Helen Appleton who ran the secondary program and to Erin Cowie and Stacey Stutchbury who coordinated the program for K-6 and EL students. Both programs ran near to full capacity.

Building works continued to dominate over the vacation period. Over Xmas/New Year the work progressed slowly however in the last two weeks it has been non-stop. Our building contractor, Tim Cumerford, has been great to work with as he understands the needs of our students and has been very supportive e.g., not using nail guns over play lessons etc. We are very appreciative of this level of sensitivity.

Unfortunately our Early Learning project has been held up and so our little ones will not start back for a week or two. Instead staff will be working on home visits to bridge the gap in provision and there may be a week or two when the program runs from the library while utilizing all the other known spaces such as OT, Music rooms and playground spaces. Thanks to our Early Learning parents for understanding.

DIARY DATES

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

In the Clocktower building a new bathroom has been added and now the Secondary program occupies the entire building. A computer lab has been added/developed in the downstairs space for both secondary classes. The creation of a larger classroom space will support the needs of our Secondary 1 class allowing more room to move.

Music has moved out of the Clocktower space and now occupies the larger space in Building 31. This space will be utilized by Secondary, College and upper Primary students with younger students using the smaller Sony Room for music. These changes will support all students across the school.

In Building 31 the 'Art Room' is now up and running with all students using this space for art lessons. Pamela Honeyfield, in collaboration with teachers and therapists, is developing and implementing this program.

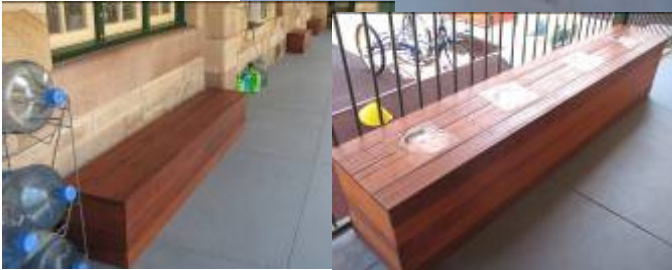
Staff training – SERVAM also ran for our new staff in the vacation period with Louise Ulliana,

IMAGINE—INCLUDE—INNOVATE

Aaron Jackson and Belinda van Wel running the sessions over a week. Staff from the school, the College as well as a few outsiders were involved and the feedback has been very positive.

Some of our parents have been working with us over the holidays and I would like to express our deep appreciation for the work they have done. Stan Saric laid the concrete path alongside Markaling House on a very hot day. Thanks Stan and all the fellows who were here at school.

Nick Kostoglou made 8 bench storage seats for us which are so well designed and act as additional storage. These benches are outside the classrooms in K-6 and Secondary.



Thank you both very much – these additions are invaluable.

Chris Mury decided to set up camp here at Giant Steps as he oversees the Early Learning building every step of the way. This is a wonderful support and we appreciate the enormous amount of time this takes, literally everyday.

One of our students has not yet returned to school, William Spencer in the Secondary program. William has been in hospital for an extended period of time and we hope that he is on the mend soon as we are keen to have him back at school.

Next week staff will be sending home class timetables and information regarding class therapy teams as there have been a few changes. Next week parents will also be asked to update Health Care Plans if children are on medication, have chronic health conditions etc. I would appreciate it if you could update these and return as quickly as possible so that we can support your child.

There have been a few staffing changes over the holiday period:

- Louise Ulliana has taken a period of long service leave over Term 1, returning Term 2.

- Sebastian Talarico has returned following a period of leave and he is now working in the Secondary program.
- Dom Talarico has taken a period of leave after 4 years of service and is now touring around the countryside with rock bands. Dom is indeed a talented musician.
- Kiersten Jerret worked in a part time capacity with us for 4 years and Kiersten has taken up a position as a Psychologist which is great news.
- Deborah Irvin has tendered her resignation after 3 years. Deb is finishing off her degree with an overseas placement.
- Michelle Jocum returns following the birth of her new baby and Tamara returns with her new baby Nikoli in tow.
- Mui, our lovely childcare worker in the crèche recently married in Thailand – congratulations.
- New staff who are joining our team include:
 - Ella Ruz – Teacher in Secondary 1
 - Nissa Caldwell – Speech Therapist
 - Francesca Robinson - Teacher Aqua class p/t
 - Jodie Campbell—Educator p/t.
- Nicole Trinca has also tendered her resignation. Nicole worked one day per week on integration support in 2009. Nicole has taken up a position on a part time basis close to home with Lifestart. We certainly thank Nicole for all of her work over the last six years; Nicole has worked in both a full and part time capacity, has had two babies in that time, has been a Team Leader and most recently coordinated the integration program. Nicole will be missed, however, it's great to see good skill sets out in the broader community supporting children with ASD.

There have been a few hiccups with transport and they may take a week or two to resolve. As a school we can make recommendations, however, we do not run the service so cannot instruct drivers to make changes without it going through the Transport Section – DET at Wollongong. This can be quite frustrating for everyone especially our students. Please let us know of any changes as parents are usually informed before the school of any adjustments that have come through.

2010 is certainly shaping up to be a wonderful year. The facilities across the school are looking terrific, the staff are very enthusiastic and gauging by the excitement of our student body at being back we are on the right track.

All the best
Kerrie and Claire



Welcome back!

Planning is still underway for this term's Sibling Groups, but while the activities aren't confirmed yet, the dates are!

Our Junior Group is meeting next Saturday... I'm looking forward to seeing some new faces, as well as welcoming back our regulars!

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

Junior Siblings group

When: Saturday 6th February 11am-2pm
Where: Meet at Giant Steps
What: Art and cooking
Who: 4 – 6 year olds
Cost: \$10 per sibling
Bring: A packed lunch

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

Senior Siblings group

When: Saturday 20th March 11am-5pm
Where: Meet at Giant Steps
What: TBA
For: +6 year olds

A Calendar of dates for 2010 is attached to the back of Friday Footnotes. Please note that the Parent Information Night for Term 1 has been put back a week.

Giant Steps Parent Social Night



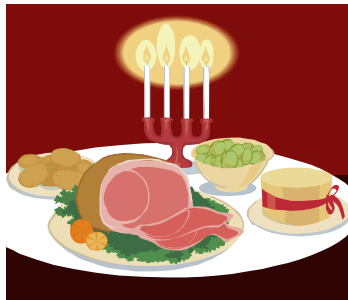
All parents who have children attending Giant Steps from Early Learning up to Post School, **(especially our new families)** please come along for a fun social evening of getting to know new families and catching up with old friends.

Date: Saturday, 6th March 2010

Where: Giant Steps Library

Start: 7.30 pm

BYO: Food (see below) PLUS your own drinks including soft drinks



Early Learning Families – salads, vegetable dishes, nibbles
K – 6 & Post School Families – please bring meat dishes, quiche, bread
Secondary Families – please bring dessert or fruit
(The kitchen will be available for re-heating if required)

**Return to the office or email RSVP by MONDAY 1 March
to Leanne Maccallum – leannemaccallum@optusnet.com.au**

For enquires, contact your Parent Advocacy Group representative



Parent Social Night

- Yes, I/we would love to come.
 No, unfortunately I / we can't make it.

Name: _____ No.attending _____

I/we will bring _____



Altered State – A Concert for Autism **TICKETS ON SALE NOW!**

Some of Australia's best comedians, musicians and entertainers will be joining together
for one night only on

Wednesday 3rd February 2010.

State Theatre

Bring all of your family and friends along to a great night of fun and entertainment in support of Autism Awareness.

- John Paul Young
- Michael Caton
- Geraldine Quinn
- Mental as Anything
- James Valentine
- Tom Gleisner
- Diesel
- Tommy Dean
- Vince Sorrenti
- Andrew O'Keefe
- Heath Franklin as 'Chopper'
- Jono and Dano

Autism Awareness calls on all of our supporters to get behind this fabulous event at Sydney's historic State Theatre.

This is the **biggest ever** fundraising event for autism in Australia. The entertainment industry has joined forces to support ***Altered State – A Concert for Autism....*** we hope you will too.

Let this be the one event you don't miss this summer!

We look forward to seeing you all in Sydney on 3rd Feb.

Tickets on sale through State Theatre or TickMaster

<http://www.ticketmaster.com.au/Altered-State-A-Concert-For-Autism-tickets/artist/1384323>

alteredstate.org.au

DIARY DATES 2010

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8	WEEK 9	WEEK 10	WEEK 11
Term 1	26 January: Australia Day ~~~~ 27 Jan: Staff Development Day ~~~~ 28 Jan: Students Return Term 1		Sun 14 Feb Working Bee			Sat 6 March Parent Wel- come & Social Night	Thurs 11 March Giant Steps Golf Day	Thurs 18 March Parent Informa- tion Night	Fri 26 March Swimming Car- nival	Thurs 1 April Last day of term	
Term 2	Mon 19 April Staff Development Day ~~~~ Tues 20 April Students return	Sat 1 May Working Bee	Fri 7 May Mothers Day Morning Tea			Thurs 27 May Parent Informa- tion Night (AGM)			Sat 19 June Giant Steps Oriental Ball		Fri 2 July Last day of term
Term 3	Mon 19 July Staff Development Day ~~~~ Tues 20 July Students return	Sun 1 Aug Working Bee				Fri 27 Aug Grandparents Day	Thurs 2 Sept Parent Informa- tion Night ~~~~ Fri 3 Sept Fathers Day Get-together		Fri 17 Sept Athletics Carnival	Fri 24 Sept Last Day of term	
Term 4	Mon 11 Oct First day of term Students return	Sat 23 Oct Working Bee					Thurs 25 Nov Parent Informa- tion Night		Fri 10 Dec Family & Friends Festival	Wed 15 Dec Last day Stu- dents ~~~~ Thurs 16 & Fri 17 Dec Staff Develop- ment Days	
											7-10 October: Step by Step Walk