



for lots of animals, plants and other living things



Collectively Kids: A Small Place Working hard to live More Sustainably



Collectively Kids/Tamariki Tātou 2014 Annual Report

Mō Tātou te Taiao ko te Atawhai

Mō Tātou te Taiao ko te Oranga

It is for us to care about the environment to ensure its well-being
In doing so we ensure our own well-being and that of future generations

2014

Collectively Kids (previously Montessori Khyber Pass) is now 21 years old and we still love what we are doing!

Overall it has been a successful and rewarding year, in spite of the ongoing issue of working within a very constrained and less than ideal funding environment. We have tried to take a creative approach - looking at ways to increase efficiency and cut cost while providing the kind of learning environment our children deserve. We did receive a very slight funding rise but this did not bring us anywhere near pre-cut funding levels or cover increases in operating costs (e.g. wages or insurance premiums). This has meant that we have had to increase fees. We are still managing to work at well over 90% qualified teacher hours in spite of no longer employing qualified relievers (one of our cost-cutting measures). However we believe that funding should support 100% qualified teachers in ECE as this is crucial to providing high quality education and care for the youngest members of our community. Our children are worth investing in!

We have managed to remain part of the NZEI Early Childhood Collective Agreement that provides the best working conditions for teachers in the childcare sector.

We are increasingly reliant on fundraising for extra income. This year most of our fundraising - raffle, movie night, photo fundraiser, calendars and diaries – took place at the end of the year which is not ideal. Thanks to all of you who have supported us. We will make a concerted effort to spread fundraisers out during the coming year which may include selling Hungry Bins. Let us know if you have any great fundraising ideas.

Other sources of income were an award from Wai Care for our water quality movie which mainly consisted of garden vouchers for our garden projects as well as grants from the Auckland City Waste Minimisation Fund (covered the cost of ½ a hungry bin and some staff time for a rubbish audit and making of resources) and the O-I Environmental fund for our garden project (covered the cost of soil testing, expert advice and some garden work).

Our focus on making our approach in all areas of CK life more coherent so that all policies and practices accurately fit within the centre philosophy and reflect and contribute to our work towards becoming a more environmentally sustainable community has continued this year. We have revised a number of policies and begun work on the garden and waste minimisation projects. Our new website is in the process of being completed and should be up and running early in 2015. This will have more information on it and is easier to manage so will be updated more regularly.

2014 has been an excellent year for broadening our relationships with the wider community.

The Education Review Office will be visiting Collectively Kids sometime during the first two terms of 2015. While ERO reviews are a little stressful they have always led to interesting discussion and it will be interesting to engage in the new review process.

Environmental sustainability



We continue to be disappointed by the lack of coherent government commitment and action in this area. Our everyday work is focussed on becoming and being a sustainable community that honours the opening statement of our philosophy:

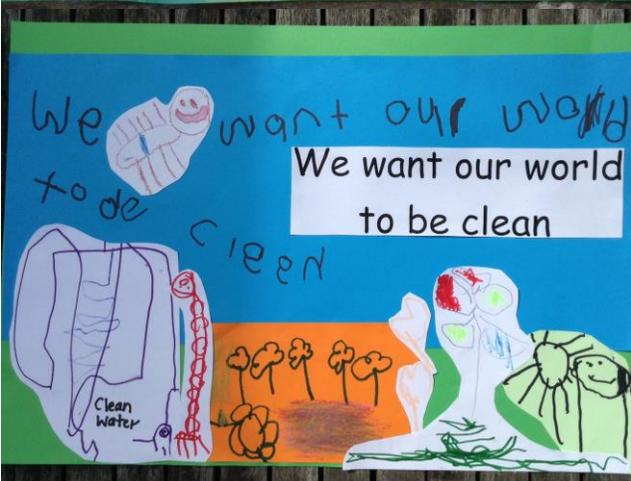
Children have the right to a peaceful, safe, secure, healthy, socially just, environmentally sustainable present and future

The position of Collectively Kids is summarized in the first minute or so of a three minute presentation I gave as part of a Childhood Studies Colloquium at the University of Auckland in November this year:

Over the last decade environmental sustainability has become the foundation of our work. Given the rapidly growing impact of climate change and environmental challenges that already affect many parts of the world including our close neighbours, this focus is now a necessity not a choice – the future of our children is at stake. Ensuring that all of our children have a viable planet to grow up and grow old on, is our main responsibility as adults. Neoliberal ideals with a focus on the individual and on constant growth have not only distracted us from this responsibility but are making it increasingly difficult to achieve.

Those of us working in education often claim that our focus is on the rights and interests of children as well as on minimising harm. Are we doing any of those things if we don't address the biggest threat that faces them? While our government talks about "doing our fair share" to limit action, I would argue that doing our fair share means

doing the most we can. We manage the smallest of risks by preparing for the worst and hoping for the best. This is an approach we should be taking right now. And at its best, the best could be a sustainable, healthy, environmentally and socially just global community.



Over the last year we have continued to reflect on and adjust our day-to-day practices, systems, policy and curriculum to make these more coherent and to ensure a better fit with global environmental issues. Our focus is also on sharing our work and concerns with the wider community (families, early childhood centres and teaching institutions, Auckland City, MPs etc...)

Advocacy for environmental sustainability

We:

- Shared information about improved practices including results and actions from our rubbish audit (providing CK made pink yoghurt and sending home cloth nappies has had a significant impact on our recycling and landfill rubbish).
- Shared community notices about local events and initiatives relating to sustainability.
- Offered families the opportunity to buy hungry bins at a discounted price.
- Shared stories and videos focussed on sustainability (rubbish collection by children, gardening and tree planting, fish expert and water testing and our latest work – “Our Future”).
- Gave presentations about sustainability:
 - At the IRECE conference in Santiago de Chile (Marina)
 - Prior to the election (Jay, Zane, Marina and Julia covering for Zane) at Unitec and CK (for NZEI, NZCA and Unitec students)
 - A post NZCA conference open day at CK
 - A presentation at NZCA about inclusion (Kate and Marina) which links to social justice in our environment policy Colloquium presentation relating to the rights of the child (Marina)
- Took part in research conducted by Rachel MacFarlane (ex CK parent) for her Masters’ degree which looked at CK as an environmentally sustainable business and identified some of the positive and more challenging aspects of running a business with a strong ethical component. Thanks to families who took part in the survey (22 of about 40). For 16 respondents the focus on sustainability was important or very important in their initial choice of childcare, all felt this had an important or very important impact in terms of satisfaction with the centre and everyone felt we address sustainability issues better than other ECE centres. The assignment will be posted on the new website.
- Hosted visits from David Shearer, Melissa Lee and Metiria Turei where we had the opportunity to address wider issues relating to sustainability – action on climate change, investment in education, equity and social justice in NZ and beyond. We also hosted a pre-election meeting attended by the CK community, David Shearer, Mahesh Bindra and Jeanette Elley with Melissa Lee on video where party representatives were asked to address the issues above and answered questions.
- Went to see “Hot Air” (as a team) at the Film Festival – a film about NZ politics relating to climate change.

We aim to continue giving presentations about environmental sustainability in 2015 and will be submitting abstracts for conferences in New Zealand.

Curriculum and projects

Our big focus is on promoting active and engaged citizenship in small and big ways in our community. We consider rights (our own, those of others and of the environment) as well as our responsibilities, particularly to make things better. Another aspect is reducing consumption and waste, the issue for reducing emissions. For children (even the youngest members of our community) this is expressed through high expectations about how we relate to each other and look after resources and our environment at the centre and in our wider community.

Examples of our work during 2014 are:

- The monitor list where the older children choose a job requiring a high level of responsibility.
- The voting/election project where children learnt about the government, parties etc.
- Sharing ideas and concerns with other agencies (Auckland City, Well-Connected and NZ Transport Agency) regarding Rawalpindi Park, Chamberlain Park and the motorway and bicycle path.
- Using books on the rights of the child to develop an understanding of what is important for children around the world and to explore issues such as equity and diversity.
- Learning to articulate ideas for instance in discussions and various video projects.
- Exploration and engagement with the natural world for younger children and learning to share and interact.
- Our involvement with Oakley Creek/Te Auaunga including learning about water quality and water testing, time with Paul the fish expert, planting, picking up rubbish, running and having fun. Wendy from Friends of Oakley Creek took us (teachers and families) on a walk along the path in late November – the video of that will be available on our website.
- Building ties with the mental health unit and Whatua Kaimarie Marae across the road – climbing trees, picking up rubbish, counting the trees for mulching, attending a pōwhiri and visits to CK from Ron, the kaumātua at the unit.
- Lots of gardening during the development of our new garden and legacy planting of a Kowhai and Totara (self-seeded from across the road) on the verge, as well as a visit to Kelmarna Gardens.





- Work on our waste minimisation project. Our aim next year will be to develop a waste minimisation policy with input from the children, use rubbish collected at the beach (over a year or so by me) to make outdoor decorations, to take a bag and gloves on each walk so we can improve every space we visit.

This year the children have:

- Helped with the rubbish audit.
- Learnt about worms and worm farms and how to sort compost for the worm farms.
- Taken part in rubbish collection in our local community during Keep NZ Beautiful Week.
- Made a bird curtain (to keep the birds outside) out of waste materials.
- We continue to develop resources to extend children's understanding of issues. This year these included a book on how toys are made, an update of our government book for our voting project, information on a number of scientific topics.
- Our future movie – while this was a difficult topic for the children to grasp, they managed to come up with clear ideas – they want the world to be clean, to have plants and animals and to have fun. I am sure all adults involved with CK wish that for our kids (globally) too! The younger children did a great job of demonstrating our philosophy in action.

I am still in the process of completing our Education for Sustainability (EFS) curriculum which has taken much longer than anticipated. It has been reviewed by Jenny Ritchie (Victoria University) and Iris Duhn (Monash University). It is now just a matter of making final changes. Once that has been done the document will be made available to families, posted on the website and will be a resource for teachers along with some key readings.

Practices:

In 2014 we have:

- Reduced our consumption and have made some changes to the way we purchase items. Things to look at next year will be reducing power use particularly through better management of heating in winter (shutting doors, pricing an air curtain for the baby room).
- Reduced waste as a result of our waste audit (particularly disposable nappies, paper towels and yoghurt containers).
- Conducted soil tests and have a new, safer, more sustainable, productive garden which will be not just a source of food but also learning.
- We continue to make Ecostore and Trade Aid orders available to parents, which also work as fundraisers for the centre. We held an Oxfam Fairtrade Coffee Break event with cooked lunches which included fair trade and organic products. A donation was made to Oxfam – thank you for your contributions.
- We have not renewed membership of the Sustainable Business Network or our Fairtrade Workplace certificate. While I support both of these initiatives I felt the annual fee for each of these could be better spent given the difficult financial environment we work in. As well as that the benefits of being members were not significant for us. Our practices will not change – we still aim to operate as a sustainable business and fairtrade workplace.
- We continue to collect and dispose of eco light bulbs and batteries and have added soft plastics to the list. We will look at collecting e waste too.
- The centre made donations to - Disability Action, Child Cancer Society, Oakley Creek, Oxfam, Guide Dogs, and Forest and Bird. We are members of Forest and Bird and the Kiwi Conservation Club which gives families access to all Forest and

Bird and KCC activities during the year and older children receive 6 magazines a year.

Teaching and Learning

We are still working hard on developing a way of planning that is collaborative and dynamic and have made some progress. We are using google drive more effectively to share information. This process does need further review and we will trial a simpler planning framework early in 2015 that will consist of key projects, goals from evaluations and Education Support Worker (ESW) notes. Discussion has started within the peer review process. We have also continued to discuss ways we can collaborate when we develop documentation for children so that stories become richer and have multiple perspectives. We already use this process for 6 monthly evaluations where drafts are posted on google drive so all teachers can add comments.

The mathematics and Efs place-based curriculum documents are almost completed. This has taken longer than expected and we will aim to make these "living" documents before tackling other curriculum areas. The next areas we will look at are language/literacy and science and technology.

We have continued to supply ESW hours for children with special needs directly (rather than using people employed by the Ministry of Education). This allows for more flexibility and ensures a good fit with CK teaching and learning as work experience students and CK teachers have taken on this role. However this option may not be available for much longer as it is not supported by NZEI, the union that covers ESWs.

The big kids' area continues to offer opportunities for the older children to engage in more challenging experiences and the younger children pop in every so often or work on the fringes. The monitor list has been a success. There will be a big change in that area over the next few months as 7 BIG kids will be leaving CK between February and March.

There is a great deal of movement between the infant toddler and over two area as the younger children spend time exploring the challenges of the bigger area and the older children help (and enjoy the peaceful smallness) of the under two area. This flexibility is great for promoting tuakana/teina relationships. As there are no children turning 5 between mid-March and August and several children under two will turn two during that period, the make-up of CK will change with fewer children in the under two area and several days when there will only be one teacher in the room. We will adjust the programme as needed to suit the new circumstances.

Ex CK children or siblings (Ralph and Sienna, Annika and Jacob, Lucy, Alex and Tahlia, Ira) have come in to organise mat times which has been a great success. Feedback from questionnaires sent to families once children have been at school for a few months indicate that CK kids settle in well and that the teachers find the summative report we write useful. The only thing people have mentioned is letter recognition. We have already begun inserting letters into CK life in more frequent and meaningful ways.

We are still exploring ways to incorporate te reo Māori into our programme more effectively. More of our books now have bilingual text which makes it much easier to switch between languages and learn new words and phrases. Thanks



Image	Job	Completed by
	Water inside plants	Logan
	Inside tidy - check areas for tidiness during the day and before mat time	Kieran
	Outside check - check for rubbish and tidiness before mat time and in the afternoon	Nathan
	Help with beds	Cameron Niamh
	Answer phone	Bea
	Run errands	Noah
	Set up big kids' lunch table	Alexander
	Tidy up after lunch	
	Lead food karakia	





to Veronique, Zane and Hannah mihihi were improved and changed to a small easy to hold format. The older children have begun to learn to introduce themselves using the phrase “Ko... toku ingoa” within the “Our Future” movie and this phrase has now also been incorporated into the CK kid’s book which was sent home as an end of year present. Please make sure that you keep this book and add photos of new children joining CK as we email those to you. The mihi that have been on display will be available for use with children individually and in small groups so we can practise. We are trying to find ways to insert te reo into resource materials, communications and displays as well as into weekly teaching plans.

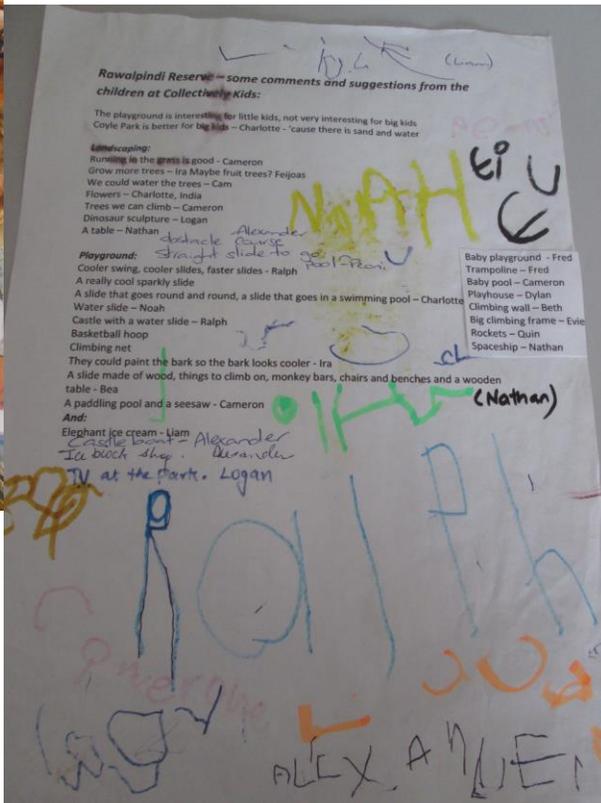


Discussion around our languages and culture policy which addresses bicultural and multicultural issues, has taken place amongst teachers and we hope to meet as a community early next year. I will be sending this policy to Jenny Ritchie (Victoria University) and Nola Harvey (University of Auckland) for expert feedback as it is a very complex area to tackle. We are trying to use home and teacher languages more effectively. We have also begun to collect more useful information regarding home languages and celebrations.

Next year we will be looking at communication with families and amongst the team including sharing of information in the most efficient ways, finding out what information you would like from us and ways in which you prefer to share information about your child so we can collaborate more effectively. We will be inviting you to give us feedback early in 2015. We have already substantially reduced emails to families by sending most information in a weekly update.



We have purchased some resources – plastic animals, new Lego and community workers and differently abled figurines to complicate construction and imaginative play. We also bought a till for shop play and added ropes and a rope ladder to the outdoor equipment. Our focus is on buying a few high quality toys that support the interests of the children and to look after our new and old (some very old) resources with great care. I will be sorting resources over the break and arranging them in ways that will make access easier for teachers which should help to keep areas dynamic and responsive to children’s interests.





Community

We fare well and welcomed a number of families, teachers and students in 2014. While there has been quite a bit of change which requires adjustment, our community is pretty stable and it is wonderful that relationships with people who have left us don't end the minute they walk out the door. Overall it has been a great year for strengthening our relationships with our community.

We:

- Hosted visits from a number of centres.
- Invited local centres (as well as CK families) to a Makaton signing workshop and inclusion evenings.
- Visited Oakley Creek/Te Auaunga which continues to be a favourite destination - we hope that the children will return to the Oakley Creek area in years to come to find it flourishing and remember that they contributed to the project.
- Visited Kelmarna gardens and now have our own little version at CK thanks to Adrian's advice and Jason's weekly gardening.
- Have had regular contact with Wai Care and have been lucky to be invited to a range of events to do with water quality.
- Supported a number of post graduate students by participating in their research projects.
- Supported several students during work experience from Special Needs Foundation Studies Unitec, practicum students from NZCA, Auckland University and Unitec.
- Continued to follow progress at the Waterview construction site on outings.
- Made contact with Well-Connected Alliance who have provided support and information about the Waterview project.



- Created a community noticeboard which we hope will be used more successfully next year.
- Gone on outings to - Coyle Park, Britomart, Pt Chev library, Rawalpindi reserve, Chamberlain Golf Course, the bike path, our street, Kieran's house to watch building work, Western Springs, Dugald's house and Whatua Kaimarie Marae.
- Visited Grey Lynn primary school and had visitors from the school and a group of children spent the morning in a classroom at Gladstone school.
- Continued our successful partnership with Ministry of Education Special Education.

- Had visits from several MPs.

We held several parent evenings and family events:

- A parent evening to discuss the inclusion policy
- A fair trade lunch/ coffee break event to fundraise for Oxfam
- A Matariki family afternoon soup and bread event
- An election candidates meeting
- A Diwali morning tea - thanks Jay
- A Siva Afi/Samoan Fire dance end of year celebration

We would like to thank:

- Dugald for doing the shopping, library run and for being so patient with us.
- Wendy from Friends of Oakley Creek for sharing her time and knowledge and for taking us (teachers and CK families) on a guided walk at the end of November.
- Jocelyn at Well-Connected Alliance for organising the installation of a skylight and Claire for helping Dugald with his garden as well as forwarding our query about the chopped down trees.
- Katie for bringing in her lovely knitting.
- Families who contributed ideas, comments, audio and video for our inclusion presentation – feedback indicated that people at the presentation found parent voices and video very powerful.
- Fraser for editing our prize winning Wai Care movie, Hamish for the fish expert video and Roseanne, Damon and Craig for working our newest project – “Our Future” movie.
- Terence, Jojo and Eli for helping to shift the mulch and for the fabulous Siva Afi.
- Jason and Adrian for garden advice and work.
- Marianne for advice re acoustics and soft fall drainage and Ang for organising Autex to come and visit.
- Brent from Autex for his advice about acoustics and for offering us a very affordable (and discounted) option.
- Ex CK kids for visiting and mat times.
- The Barker family for letting us visit to see the crane.
- Catherine and Andrew for donations for our raffle.
- Ecostore and Honeywrap people for their contributions to the raffle.
- Steve for his work on the computers (making our office a better work space) and Chapman Tripp for computers, screens and key boards.
- Alannah for organising movie night, people for bringing nibbles and buying tickets, particularly Shelley for record sales, the Mantell family for the wine.
- Rachael for the photo fundraiser.
- The many family members who helped on outings.
- The Health unit (Whatua Kaimarie) for letting us climb the trees and Ron the Kaumātua for visiting CK.
- Kate from Wai Care and Paul the fish expert.
- Iris Duhn (Monash University), Jenny Ritchie (Unitec), Sophie Alcock (Unitec) for their support and advice.
- Petra for banana deliveries.
- Boris for the computer.
- Onehunga carpets for free and discounted carpet.
- AND TO ANYONE ELSE WE HAVE FAILED TO MENTION!

Thanks to CK families for:

- Sharing your ideas, concerns, the good times and bad with us which help us to work together to provide the kind of early childhood environment your children deserve.
- Countless donations and presents including:
Reusable bags, plants, cloth nappies, baby monitors, baskets, plant pots, food for shared meals and other times, fruit and vegetables, a wide range of art materials, carpentry wood, material, music, books, toys and other new and pre- loved resources, towels, clothes, fruit and vegetables, dress-ups and all the other things you have brought in.
- Your time and energy for:

Breastfeeding demonstrations (has added another perspective to family play), ICT advice, attending parent evenings and other CK events, responding to emailed documentation, answering questionnaires, fundraising, signing letters and all the other wonderful things you have done for us over the year...

Premises and Facilities

The centre was painted over the break last year. We have a skylight in the shed now - thanks to Well-Connected for installing that. We replaced the soft fall, improved drainage and distributed the old soft fall around the Pohutukawa trees we love to climb. We have some new carpets. We are hoping to get underlay for carpets and replace some noticeboards with acoustic tiles early next year to improve the acoustics at the centre. During this break we will be cleaning, working in the garden, taking another look at earthquake proofing, tidying up and sorting resources and storage in all areas.

In 2015 we will get a quote for replacing our ceiling acoustic tiles and recoating the wooden floors. We will explore different options for replacing the fale roof as new thatch (natural or plastic) costs more than \$3,000. We will try to find someone to do some sewing for us (mainly cushion covers that need replacing).

A big change for us will be that cleaning will be taken on by a company when Josh leaves us for a job that better fits with his (newly acquired) qualifications.

Governance/management (Marina)

I have made slow but steady progress towards making my workload more manageable and this is still one of my main goals. Strategies are now clearly outlined for discussion within our peer review/appraisal process. I have taken a couple of weeks leave during the year to catch up on work. There have been a few comings and goings that have required reorganisation and involved a temporary increase in workload as we adjusted to changes. I have now almost caught up again, hopefully that will be completed over the holiday period and I plan to put better strategies in place from the beginning of 2015.

Moving to Thank You Payroll has made wages easier. Enrolment information and several policies have been reviewed. We have been working on making our appraisal/peer review process more effective. We are using of google drive more efficiently for sharing information, reviewing policy and documenting review processes.

Staff and Professional Development

Working as a team in Early Childhood settings can be a challenge – it is physically, intellectually and emotionally demanding and requires a huge amount of communication and negotiation (not just with the children). I would like to thank the teachers once again for their hard work and support during good times and bad and for the varied and excellent strengths they bring to the CK community – we are a multilingual, multitalented bunch!

This year we said goodbye to Vanessa (after many years at CK) and welcomed Veronique and Shari to the team. We continue to have an excellent support team of Unitec ECE students. Julia (who is leaving us this year), Jojo (who has returned with Eli) and Sophie (who has recently joined us, replacing Morgan who moved to another centre) spend two days a week at CK each as part of their work experience requirement. We are grateful to them for stepping in to cover hours when teachers are away. We will be looking for a student to replace Julia.

We have had changes in our office helpers. Marie left us and Hannah took over for a few months but is now travelling. Zane has taken on some administration jobs including managing fees. We will look at sharing other tasks amongst the teaching team and with work experience students.

Teachers participated in a wide range of professional development including reading, attending courses, conferences, lectures and taking part in presentations. Teachers have shared information from PD within Google drive documents and at staff meetings. Jay (who has a Masters in Environmental Sciences) has given mini science presentations meetings.



A big thank you to:

- Vanessa for her work at CK
- Our cleaner Josh (who will probably leave us in the first few months of 2015)
- John (CK caretaker and co-director)
- Hannah and Marie for their work in the office
- Julia, Jojo and Sophie for relieving and office work

News from the teachers



Jay

Kia ora,

It is hard to believe that 2015 is approaching...the countdown's already begun; the year 2014 really went like wooshh...! It was packed with a great deal of learning and growing experiences in various facets of life associated with children. And yes achievements too, I gained my full registration. We also won the Wai Care community award for the water movie -a fantastic contribution from the children and a great team effort. I did a few presentations on Climate Change as a part of Sustainability in Early childhood Education with Marina and Zane. I continue to volunteer for Wai Care for monitoring the water quality of OC stream as before.

The last leg of the year has been quite challenging for me as I moved out West. Definitely, enjoying the Waitakere ranges out there but not the stretched commuting time from just a 10 minutes' walk to 1 hr train. As I settle down at my new place I will hopefully be able to find a better way out.

As the year approaches to an end, I look forward to my trip to India to spend some time with my parents and reviving nostalgic moments of the place where I spent my childhood.

Thank you all for your continuous support. Take care and have a relaxing holiday with your family and friends.

Ngā mihi nui

Jay



Julia

The past year has flown by as most years seem to do. I swear the older I get the faster the years fly by! The youngest members of the CK whānau have kept me on my toes as together we have explored, discovered and for me delighted in being a part of their lives and learning to take life slowly and enjoy the small (often missed by adults) things like the joy of watching the flax blowing in the breeze! 2014 threw up some rather stressful times for my whānau. I have to say I now know the floor plan of Auckland Hospital rather well! I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in the CK community for their continued support.

During the year I continued to be an Associate Teacher supporting some wonderful students through their under two practicum experience. I am delighted that one of those students (Sophie) has now joined the CK team to complete her work experience hours as she studies for her teaching degree. April 2014 saw us farewell Vanessa whom I had the pleasure to work alongside for nearly 14 years. In November I had the pleasure of travelling to Rarotonga for her wedding. It was a trip that had been planned since January prior to Iain's ill health. The short holiday became an opportunity for me to have five days in the sunshine relaxing and recharging with great weather and good company. My fantastic children took charge of their dad's care during my time away and it's times like this that make me a very proud mum.

Over the holidays I am looking forward to spending quality time with my family and friends and weather permitting a few days in the sunshine.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Julia



Kate

Another busy year has just flown by and (as usual) I feel just a little bewildered at where it has gone with such haste (perhaps that's an age thing)! Several new families joined our CK community and several departed. It is always with mixed feelings we farewell 'our' kids – excited and happy for them as they take off for school and a little bit sad at the gap they leave. Luckily many of our 'alumni' return to visit and sometimes lead a mat time, which always makes for an attentive audience! We also farewell Vanessa, who I had worked with since starting at CK in 2000. She too left a gap but it was great to welcome Shari to the team this year in her place.

We opened our doors again this year to students from various tertiary providers on practicum as part of their studies in early childhood. I continued to mentor students in the role of associate teacher for some of these. It was also great having Morgan, Sophie, Julia and Jojo from UNITEC as our regular work experience students (and occasional relievers). In April I attended a Makaton course provided by GSE and hosted at CK for our own community and other local centres. This was a great refresher and it has been wonderful to see all our children pick up so many signs (and occasionally teach them to their families as well). In June I attended a Food Forest course run by my lovely friend Jo Duff from Kahikatea Farm in the Hawkes Bay. Food Forests are a way of growing plants that mimic a forest situation – with different layers of plantings (from canopy plants right down to ground covers and roots). Plants are often 'multifunctional' meaning the garden not only provides food (for us and other animals) but may also have other functions such as medicinal, shelter, nitrogen fixing, flood protection and so on!

In July Marina and I co-presented a workshop at the NZCA conference. '20 Years as an inclusive community' was the culmination of input from parents, other centres and our own experience providing an inclusive educational environment and we are really grateful for the generous contributions of everyone who helped us with this. Other professional development included attending a couple of workshops (and smaller peer group meeting) focussed on the development of evidence for teacher registration (and internal review) processes, attending some workshops at the NZCA conference and epipen training.

This year I was lucky enough to take a quick trip to Northland over Easter and ANZAC weekend – it was great being able to experience this part of the country (as brief as it was) and I would love to return.

I'd finally like to say a big thank you to my colleagues for their hard work and unending support and all the families and children who have made this year at CK such a great one. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your ongoing engagement and encouragement and look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Have a safe and relaxing break!

Nga mihi nui

Kate

Lisa



Kia ora whānau, and friends,

2014 is nearly over! It's been a busy year for me, with some successes and challenges along the way. In the earlier half of the year I enrolled to study again in post graduate studies at Te Tari Puna Ora O Aotearoa (New Zealand Childcare Association). The course outline was on leadership, and I successfully completed a paper on leading teams. I read a wide range of theory, and have extended my own knowledge base. One of the great aspects for me doing this paper was to learn more about the qualities of being a successful mentor, and a leader of teams. This has been useful in guiding me to support student teachers to successfully complete their own goals and learning outcomes for their studies. As I continue to embark on my leadership journey I am sure the theory I have read and will continue to explore will see me challenge and extend my own practice in this area.

Leadership is an area I have become particularly interested in, and look forward to exploring in more depth in 2015. I would like to say thank you to my colleagues who were supportive of me through this challenging time in my studies. 2014 has seen me continue to look at ways I can challenge and extend myself with my interest in drama, and storytelling. I have found the children's own ideas, and dialogue on topics of interest to them sophisticated and refreshing. I look forward to extending on this in the New Year.

Last month I arranged a visit to Gladstone primary school for some of our older children. One of my goals had been to make links with the local schools and arrange the occasional visit. Gladstone primary have been supportive and encouraging of this. Not all of our children will go to Gladstone Primary however my belief was that this would help give children an idea of what happens in a classroom, and what to expect when they do go to school. The children who attended the trip had prepared some great questions for the teacher and the class which they happily answered. I look forward to making further links with Gladstone Primary in the future. Transition to school continues to be an area I am also very interested in.

We have had some great things happen at Collectively Kids this year one of these being the funding to establish a new and improved outdoor area. The environment is looking fabulous, and there are many people to thank for making this happen. It's great to have a better system for managing and reducing waste, and the worm farm seems to be doing well. I know for myself learning more about this is a work in progress, and I look forward to learning more. 2014 saw us as a team say good bye to Vanessa, and welcome Veronique, and Shari. I look forward to starting the New Year fresh as part of a great team, CK family, and community.

Over the holiday period I look forward to catching up with extended family from Australia. My aunty whom I am very close to in age, were very close growing up until she moved to Australia many years ago. We lost contact for several years, and reunited again a couple of years ago. I feel very excited about having her, her husband, and my cousin in the country for Christmas. We are planning a little Bay of Islands trip which will be grand. My brother and his family are also heading up so extra special. I look forward to spending time with my partner, hopefully some time sailing together, and spending time with my children and grandchildren.

I wish everyone a safe and happy holiday period, and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year

Arohanui

Lisa



Shari

Talofa lava,

Since joining Collectively Kids in April 2014, I have had the opportunity to work in the over 2 and under 2 areas, from which I have learnt so much about children's development and learning and I know that there is so much more to learn. This year was the first full time job that I have had since the birth of my son in 2008, (I had been working part time and doing some volunteer work) so it has been a big change for my family and I but a positive change, more so with the help and support of working in a warm and welcoming environment.

Early on in December I attended a professional development course in Christchurch called *Toddlerific*, which focused on children's social and cultural competencies. Underpinning this course was a workshop presented by Nathan Mikaere-Wallis about the importance of children having relationships with the people, places and things around them for the development of the brain during the early years and the significant role that adults play in this. Therefore, I have really enjoyed getting to know all the children and forming my own relationships with them that continue to build every day. I have also enjoyed and valued the conversations that I have had with the families and friends of CK and I look forward to having many more.

As the Christmas holiday approaches I am looking forward to spending time with my family in Hamilton and perhaps a road trip to Rotorua!

May you all have a Merry Christmas and safe new year!
La manuia le Kerisimasi ma le tausaga fou!

Shari Soon



Veronique

Bonjour à tous.

This time last year I was submitting my final professional inquiry portfolio to complete my Bachelor of Early Childhood Teaching. With 2014 drawing to an end it is time to reflect on my first year as a teacher/learner at Collectively Kids.

In 2014, I have mainly focused on getting to know the Collectively Kids' children and their families. Establishing meaningful relationships with the teaching team has also been on my agenda. Sharing my time between the under and over 2's has helped me to achieve these goals. I have enjoyed watching and supporting children develop relationships with their peers as well as with older children. I would like to take this opportunity to say "merci" for welcoming me in your community. "Merci" to the teachers and to Marina for listening and sharing their views with me throughout the last 12 months.

Teachers never stop learning, they learn from the communities they are involved with and from the world around them. This year I completed my first aid course, a basic food safety course and had the opportunity to hear local and international researchers at the annual early childhood conference in Auckland. I listened to our local politicians during Collectively Kids' "meet the candidates" evening and learnt more about New Zealand's environmental history when all the teachers went to see the documentary "Hot Air". Pretty useful material when, as teachers, we constantly engage with the children about citizenship, environmental issues and how they see their future (to name a few).

Have a wonderful break and looking forward to see you all in the New Year.



Zane

Papatūānuku te matua o te tangata.
Mother earth is humankind's parent.

Aw what? I have to write another of these things? I'm sure I only just wrote one. Maybe that was for a different organisation. Maybe.

Kia ora! Thus endeth the year that was 2014. The year that had some things happen in it. It was also the year that did not have some things happen in it. Because those things happened in another year.

I think that is enough time spent saying absolutely nothing.

This year was my second year working at Collectively Kids. It was all wonderful times. Except that one time. Ooh that one time. I never liked that one time. That one time and I have not spoken since.

I was lucky enough to use my interest in politics and elections in our elections project, which saw us tackling the big issues and making the tough decisions, such as would we rather have a dinosaur, a block, or a piece of food as Prime Minister.

I also got to help organise a meet the candidates evening for the CK community. We had Labour, National, NZ First, and the Greens represented. It was great to have the candidates there to answer questions and speak on the issues that our community cared about. Well. Most of the candidates spoke on the issues we cared about. Well some of them did.

It was great to see the older children engage with the topic so enthusiastically. Voting and elections is something I have always been so passionate and interested about so it was neat to see the children share this interest.

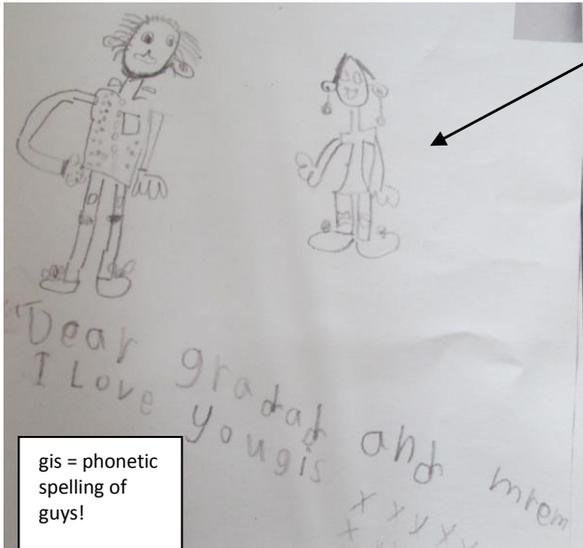
We need to keep this interest alive. At CK we show the variety of ways that we as citizens can take part, have our voice heard, and work towards making our community, and planet a better place for all. Talk with people about politics, encourage people to engage. Write letters, make submissions, attend a protest. Encourage others to follow in your footsteps. We need to show people that politics has a direct impact on everyday life and that it is important to vote, to express your opinions, to make sure these governing bodies take action to do what is best for this planet and those who don't have a voice.

This year I participated in giving talks alongside Marina and Jay to other ECE teachers and students about climate change, the centre's EFS curriculum, and voting. Three guesses what topic I covered. I'll give you a clue: I talked about voting.

Outside of the CK community 2014 saw me take on a role within the Green Party as the co-convenor of the Young Greens, the youth network of the Greens. This position has kept me quite busy throughout the year doing a variety of things. Liaising with student groups on campuses, organising workshops and camps, speeches, articles, volunteer management, and being part of the Green Party youth campaign team. It has been quite a lot of work at times and at other times it has been quite devastating, but it has been worthwhile and am currently enjoying organising and look forward to attending the upcoming Young Greens camp in January.

As for the immediate future I am off to Wellington for a couple of days. Well actually I will be in Martinborough, in the Wairarapa, to enjoy spending time with family in the sun looking out over the vineyards. Rather bourgeoisie way to spend the holidays, don't you think?

Mā te wā!



Marina (Drawing by Peggy, John's granddaughter)

Kia ora whānau,

I feel like I write the same thing every year, too much work, too little leisure time – the lament of the small business owner BUT I think things are getting better and my list is getting shorter... An amount of stress is a part of running a business, particularly one that is intimate, emotional, relationship based and ambitious (in terms of our vision) like CK. Also the bigger goals of CK, environmental sustainability, are very important to me personally as I believe our future (particularly that of our children) depends on finding more sustainable and equitable ways of living so I am prepared to invest a lot of time and energy in that. There are aspects of my work that can be changed/reduced and those are the things that I will be tackling in early 2015.

I have did manage to have some good and interesting holidays. 2014 began with a trip to South America. My first stop was in Santiago de Chile to present a paper at a conference. Highlights were visiting Pablo Neruda's house and the Museum of Memory and Human Rights which deals with the impact of military dictatorship on Chile. After that I headed to Montevideo for my uncle's 70th birthday. It was great to catch up with family, many of whom had also travelled a long way for the occasion. I spent a lot time listening to and videoing my aunts and uncles telling stories about their lives as German Mennonite refugees relocated to Uruguay after WWII. I am still not quite sure what to do with all of that information. The weather was crazy – very hot, fierce storms and torrential rain. Growing inequality has meant that Uruguay has become less safe and I ended up having an unplanned adventure which involved getting mugged while walking in a sleepy country town with my two aunts and my mum. I held on to my bag, the two muggers fell off their motorbike. I had some cuts and bruises but hope that the muggers (who looked a little stunned) also had worse injuries. Later in the year I visited my daughter Maya in Melbourne – no mugging just lots of excellent coffee, food and conversation. I also had a couple of work catch up weeks in the beautiful and peaceful environment of Little Huia – amazing how much you can get done without internet access! Just before Christmas John, Maya and I experienced more adverse weather on Great Barrier Island – fortunately the couches were comfy, we had lots of food and books and the view was spectacular. In January we are hoping to do the Tongariro crossing with my (only) cousin in NZ and his sister and husband from Uruguay. Finger's crossed that the weather is good for that!

Life is quiet now in our house (aside from our noisy elderly cat). Maya has returned to Melbourne to start her medical internship and my son, Paolo is living with his dad in London and working on a research project. My big personal project for next year is moving my mum from her house to a smaller place closer to us.

I am really proud of the work we have done this year and am constantly astonished by the very capable and engaged CK kids of all ages. In 2015 my focus will continue to be on reducing our carbon footprint (at home and at CK) as well as sharing our work as a sustainable community and advocating for national and global action on climate change particularly for a reduction in emissions. Exploring active and engaged citizenship will be a part of that. I am planning to email our Futures video to MP's and the Prime Minister with a New Year's greeting early in 2015 – I am sure that will have an instant impact on policy!

A big thank you to the CK teaching team and the whole CK community for your support.

I wish you all the very best for the coming year

Arohanui

Marina



Ngā mihi o te
Kirihimete me
TeTau Hou



Siva afi
Samoan fire
dance
End of year
celebration 2014



Terence, Tim and Tai are available for functions.
For information go to: <http://www.tahimana.weebly.com> or www.facebook.com/terencepaulsivaafi

