



## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT ON 2008 SCHOOL YEAR.

Term 1, 2008 was very short and blighted by chicken pox, chest infections and tummy upsets. During the summer break the teachers had moved Edith's room into the two vacated rooms in the old portable. It was a huge job and took many hours by all of us and further hours of organizing equipment by Edith. Eventually the group had a palatial setting with room to move and stretch. The whole school theme for the term was 'healthy living' which involved learning about how best to look after our bodies through healthy eating, exercise and knowledge about how our bodies work. Edith's group went fruit picking and Wendy's went to a community garden to see how vegetables are grown.

The term culminated in a family healthy lunch. All foods brought were placed on the table with the relevant colour assigned to the food group. This reflected the work done with the students during the term to help them to identify the various food groups and the quantities in which they should be consumed. Green foods are to be eaten freely, amber foods should be eaten sparingly and red foods should only be eaten occasionally.

Skipping became our exercise and many students gained excellent skills. We held our 'skipathon' in which students showed off their skills whilst earning money. We had 'double Dutch', linked skipping, partner skipping, skipping backwards with one partner facing forwards, and travelling skipping. It was a very hot day and students had ample opportunity to get drinks and food which enabled them to carry on for the full sessions. The money earned was split, according to the student vote, between the children in East Timor and our sponsored children in India.

Parents participated on the day and also enjoyed the fun.

Cathy was appointed as teacher librarian and took up the post from the start of term.

We held Whole School and Home Group meetings as well as our AGM. All were well attended and all available Council positions were filled.

Preparations got under way for our participation in the Warrandyte Festival. Unfortunately the weekend of the festival was unbelievably hot and our efforts were poorly rewarded.

2008 saw the introduction of OHSC at Village School after many parents had expressed a wish that we included it as part of the service we offer.

PD for Tanya, Bronwyn and Leanne centered around understanding students with autism. Edith attended PD relating to cognitive development and Wendy attended PD relating to the teaching of literacy.

Term 2 was a very long term but seemed to go really quickly. Term began with a trip to the beach at Edithvale. This was a free play day which saw our students organise themselves into games groups, sand sculptors, beachcombers, students of marine life and sand writers. We travelled in the

luxury of air conditioned coaches. Edith's group and Mary's enjoyed a trip to Chesterfield Farm which included a tractor ride and milking a cow.

Edith and Wendy ran a Letterland workshop for the parents in their groups who really appreciated the insight they gained from it into some of the ways children learn to read.

The groups took charge of the garden beds around the school in an effort to improve the school's appearance. The older groups visited Garden World in Keysborough to get some ideas of what to plant. Unfortunately our rabbit population enjoyed our results as did our free range chooks.

Wendy's group enjoyed a visit to a carpenter's workshop where they built toys as part of their theme.

'Go for your Life' visited as a follow up to our earlier healthy living theme.

All staff undertook PD to maintain our 'Asthma Friendly School' status. All Village teachers are now trained in the use of the EpiPen and one belonging to school is taken with us on all camps and excursions.

We had a demonstration of Interactive White Boards and immediately put them on the wish list. Mary attended a 2 day PD on Autism.

Edith did a First Aid level 2 refresher.

Our goat Manuel dislocated his shoulder trying to escape from the paddock. After veterinarian assistance he recovered. Our female goat, Dolly, had one of many phantom pregnancies.

Our students played a game of basketball against Preshil and much to their delight, won. We hosted visitors from Hurstbridge Learning Co-Op who, as part of their time here had a pony ride courtesy of Marie.

We had the first Farm visit for a few years from a local kinder. They wish to return this year.

Out of seventeen students enrolled at grade 3 and 5 levels ten sat the NAPLAN testing. Out of the remaining seven, five were withdrawn because of learning disabilities/impairments and a further three by parents expressing a philosophical disagreement with the method of testing. Out of the four grade 3 students three achieved within or above the benchmark level in spelling, grammar and punctuation and all 4 scored within or above in numeracy, reading and writing.

Of the six grade 5 students four out of six scored within or above the expected level for spelling, numeracy and reading, five out of six scored within or above for writing and all six scored within or above for grammar.

Our own mid-year testing, parent/teacher interviews and report writing took place. As Village has such a small student population tests were used which gave results against national benchmarks in order to give parents an understanding of their child/ren's level nationally.

Rehearsals got underway for our Performance as did planning for sets and costumes.

Our annual Sleepover took place on the second last day of term 2 and for once the weather was dry. It was, however, windy which made the bonfire lighting very interesting. Although several bonfires were built, we only managed to light and enjoy one in the time designated by Maroondah Council.

Term 3 was dominated by our preparations for our performance of HMS Pinafore. The art room became a workshop for parents busy making props, sets and costumes.

Our Performance Camp was held at Camp Oasis in Mt Evelyn and was enjoyable. Our policy on camps became the topic for our Whole School Meeting which included information about our policy on WWCC cards. All parents wishing to work with Village students in the rooms, go on excursions or Camps must be in possession of a current WWCC card.

Our Performance went very well and included most of our students being on stage most of the time. They did an excellent job on the night throwing in the odd ad lib as they went.

Themes for the term reflected the nautical nature of our production. Tanya's and Edith's did Ocean, Wendy did Pirates and Mary's enjoyed the promised free choice.

Members of the Eltham Scout Group visited the two older groups to show us how to tie knots and the reasons for using them. One of our visitors was a past student which was especially nice.

Edith's and Wendy's groups were invited to visit Lilydale library dressed as '70's personalities to help celebrate its birthday.

Leanne finished her Advanced Integration qualification which took many weeks of Mondays.

Edith attended PD on integrating IT in the classroom. Mary went to a seminar on applying for funding for students with disabilities. Wendy did more of the First Steps to Literacy.

During the year all students enjoyed Freeform, gymnastics, horse riding and games in turn as part of our sports curriculum.

Once our Performance was over, we held a mass planting in the billabong area behind the farm.

The older students helped the younger ones to plant trees and to put guards around them.

Our resident photographer, Bronwyn was on hand to take pictures of the planting, she also has some excellent ones of the Performance.

We, like many other schools, were hit by the 'bug' which made many of us very sick indeed.

Whatever it was, it was in no hurry to leave and affected many badly. Wendy's proposed trip to the snow was cancelled as a result. Edith, who had also planned to go, couldn't get enough drivers to transport the group so that trip was cancelled also.

We received a Literacy Week grant and Anna Ciddor, came to Village to chat to all our students in two groups. Parents and teachers, as well as students, thoroughly enjoyed her sessions. Anna was later invited back to do a writers work shop with the older students and was impressed with some of their work.

The Pirate Party enjoyed by Wendy's group inspired us to hold the Pirate Olympics which turned out to be the best fun we've had in a while. Students were divided into 'ships' and left to design their flags, compose their own songs and compete, far too fairly for pirates, in the various activities. Parents also had fun and competed willingly. Unfortunately they came second when climbing the rigging.

Term 4 was hectic to put it mildly.

Wendy ran a very effective orientation program for our new Prep intake (spanning terms 3 and 4) during this time parents met with each staff member for a chat and even got to meet Cassidy the pony, in the company of Marie. Whilst parents chatted to staff, the children enjoyed sessions with Wendy getting to know her and the surroundings. At the final session the children met their Big Friend and were given a Village hat and t-shirt.

Tanya's and Mary's groups visited the local library to borrow books to help in their studies. Tanya's group studied the history time line, Mary's studied ancient civilizations, Edith's continued studying ocean and Wendy's investigated space going into IMAX for an exciting if tiring day out. Edith's group visited Phillip Island.

David Miller, author and grandfather of one of our students, came to share his writing secrets with us along with his techniques for illustrating using paper sculptures.

Anna Ciddor returned for her writer's workshop during which time our students had the privilege of a one to one conference with her.

Our Camp was held at Portsea Children's Camp and was very successful in spite of the weather being somewhat chilly. The preceding week had been very warm and many of us didn't pack enough warm clothing. The food was enjoyable as were the camp activities and the beautiful beaches.

After Camp it was time once again for end of year testing, parent/teacher interviews and report writing. Once again, we used testing materials which provided parents with student results against national benchmark levels.

Our newly formed equestrian team attended several events and had a number of medals to show for their efforts. We played soccer against Preshil and lost but had a good time catching up with friends.

Mary and Tanya updated their First Aid level 2, Bronwyn completed hers and Wendy completed her studies of First Steps.

Dog Day took place and was lots of fun. Many students brought their dogs and entered them in the exercises provided. The proceeds of this day go towards supporting guide dogs for the blind.

During the year Vikki ran the games sports sessions for all groups. Term 4 was the turn of Tanya's group. As part of this program, they climbed the Thousand Steps' also known as the Kakoda Trail after the one endured by the Australian army in WW2. The students found out about the real trail before attempting this one.

Our end of year concert which was scheduled to take place in our amphitheatre, was held at Wonga Park Hall due to the inclement weather. It was rather cramped but our audience seemed to thoroughly enjoy the evening. As a result of the change of venue the planned equestrian display couldn't take place and had to be postponed until the following year.

We held our traditional grade 6 night out which saw us go into the city to Crown to see the Xmas decorations, to the arcade to play games and then to the Jam Factory to see High School the Movie 3. After this we wended our sleepy way home.

On the last Thursday of term the whole school went to the Karylika Theatre to see a performance by the Ringwood Ballet which included guest appearances by Kate and Cassidy – the pony.

On the last day we enjoyed Xmas parties, a visit from Santa bearing gifts and a sad 'goodbye' to our graduating grade 6 students.

Two students went to Billanook College and one went to Maroondah Secondary. We wish them the very best and look forward to hearing great things from them.