

Summer 2016



# lighthouse

early learning centre

## Introducing Helen

This month we are delighted to be able to introduce and profile our new centre manager – Helen.

Helen has been an early childhood education teacher for over ten years and a central part of the lighthouse leadership team. Helen's journey to become an ECE Teacher started because of her strong love for children and her recognition of how important these early years are in a child's life.

Helen has worked as an ECE teacher, leader, and manager in a variety of high quality centres and for home based services.

She is a passionate, caring, loving and very knowledgeable person dedicated to building trusting and reciprocal relationships with the children and parents.

Helen's belief of honesty, integrity, professionalism and Care embodies the lighthouse virtues and we are delighted to announce as of this year, Helen will be taking over leadership of our centre.

Helen: "I am excited to have the opportunity to make our centre great look forward to getting to know and work with all the lovely children and families of Lighthouse Albany."



## Welcome!

Welcome to our first Lighthouse Early Learning Centre Newsletter for Albany. We hope you all have had a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We are pleased to be starting 2016 with you all and we look forward to creating many precious moments and memories with your little ones in the months to come!

## In this Newsletter

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We have been doing lots of activities and adventures which you can find here!

### Learning Theme

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Our new learning theme for the next few months is focusing around the beach and summer!

### Announcements

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Here is where you will find important announcements and events!



# Our Mission to the Auckland City Mission

**On December the 18th 2015, our preschool children embarked on an important mission to the Auckland City Mission.**

Over the last few months our children has been learning about the importance of "appreciation" and what it means to give to those less fortunate, especially around the time of Christmas.

We had asked all our wonderful parents to bring in any food donations that you could for the Auckland City Mission, and we were humbled with the large amount of donations we were all able to bring.

During our classes we asked the children if they would like to come and drop the donations off themselves, and with a unanimous exclamation of "YES!" the decision was made!



The children were very excited during the morning of the excursion and couldn't wait to get onto the mini bus. The car ride was filled with smiles as the children sang "the wheels on the bus.." and pointed out the Sky Tower and other landmarks as we travelled across the harbour bridge.

Upon arrival we were greeted by one of the lovely volunteers. Each child helped to carry in a bag of food to donate. We then spent time reminding the children about how they are helping, and we even got a peek at some of Santa's helpers in the present room!

We ended the adventure with a light snack before venturing back to our learning centre.

Though this was only a little trip, it taught the children a very big and meaningful lesson about giving and caring for others. We will continue to talk to the children about other ways that we can support the people within our local and wider communities, and we encourage parents to revisit this day with their children to reinforce the learning.







# Our Christmas Concert

On Friday 11th December 2015, we had our first Christmas Concert with the children. The children all worked hard to practice for the show and many older children were even involved in helping the teachers prepare props and costumes.

All the children performed brilliantly and a lot of stars were born that day!

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who attended the Christmas Concert, as we know how happy it made the little ones!

The children put a lot of effort into the concert and it was adorable to see how their faces lit up when they found their parents in the audience!

The atmosphere of the centre was full of Christmas cheer and there was an abundance of smiles and laughter all around.

There were three performances by each of our Lighthouse age groups and all of them were fantastic! We are very proud of all the children and how well each and every one of them did!

After the performances we had a very special visit from Santa Claus himself! Santa handed out gifts to all the children as a special early Christmas treat. Everyone then moved into the foyer to nibble on some delicious treats while spending quality time with their family members. It really was a wonderful occasion for everyone and we look forward to celebrating more festivities with you and your children in the future.





## Activities and Play at our Learning Centre

We are always planning a variety of activities and fun tasks for the children to do, while also giving them ample amounts of time to play and socialise with each other. Here are a few of our favourite photos from the last few months!





# Our Current Learning Curriculum:



Now that the children are starting to come back from their summer holidays we have noticed that the children are starting to show great interest in going to the beach, swimming in the sea, and discovering the sea life. So we have decided to extend the children's interest on this by making it the focus of our curriculum for this month.

Throughout this curriculum we would love for the parents and families to jump on board with us and encourage and support your child in sharing about their times at the beach. Through this we will continue to extend on the children's current knowledge about water safety and the wonderful world that lives under the sea.

We are looking forward to hearing from the children and helping to build a great understanding of what the children already know. We want to extend on this further by talking about how to look after the shore lines, the animals that we can find in the sea and how important it is to be safe at the beach.

Some other ways that you can extend this focus with your children at home is:

- talk to them about where rubbish goes,
- talking about what food we can eat from the sea
- take your child down to explore rock pools where you may find some sea life!
- You could even get a fishing line out and take your child fishing

We encourage your child to bring along photos, bags with shells and most importantly their adventurous stories to share with their fellow classmates.

Through encouraging and supporting the links between home and the centre it is a great opportunity for our new teaching team to get to know your child and their family a little more.





# The Benefits of Combining Age Groups

Hopefully by now you would have seen some of the changes to the layout of the centre. These include:

1. Giving teachers the ability to combine and separate toddlers and pre-schoolers by opening and closing off the preschool and toddler learning areas
2. Setting up an area dedicated to preschool learning in the morning extension to school programs
3. Setting up focused learning areas in the rooms

This newsletter we would like to take about the benefits of combining the preschool and toddlers learning areas. Most modern, purpose built ECE centres choose to separate all children into distinct age groups. Often a centre the size of Lighthouse Albany will have 3-4 rooms, and would typically have children of within roughly 1-1½ years of each other in each room. Miracle also rang the centre as such. Why then did we invest close to 20K to change this?

Lighthouse has been operating for over 30 years in the howick area. Throughout that time we have had a fantastic reputation as a centre focused on education, care and morals. Having a combined age group has played a pivotal role in helping us to achieve this. Accelerated development for toddlers:



In a single age group environment, there is limited peer stimulation of children and few role models for the younger children to aspire to.

Having the mix of older and younger children offer the younger children older children to challenge and stimulate them every day, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

**Language and motor skills** also develop very quickly in mixed age learning situations meaning you will have a very competent and confident little child who will give anything a go within their ability!

## Teaching to care and to nurture

The benefits of combined age groups are even more important to older children than to younger children. Older children are encouraged to care for, support and assist younger children. This becomes the perfect platform to teach older children empathy, responsibility, care and compassion and sets the foundations for the older children to grow into caring and responsible adults.





### Better social skills

In parks, churches, schools and at home, children are not isolated to only other children of their age.

In our natural environment the children will need to interact to other children of all ages. In our controlled mixed age group environment, the little ones can safely learn the skills needed to interact with older children or younger children under the diligent care and attention of our supportive teachers so they will have the social skills from an early age to work cooperatively within the social norms.



### More support for each child's developmental stage

As childcare professionals, we are always focused on the individual development and milestones of children. We recognise that all children develop at their individual speeds and that they all have their own weaknesses and strengths. The hall mark of a good ECE teachers is that we notice and recognise these weaknesses and work on them with the children while celebrating and extending on each child's strengths.

In a mixed age environment we have more activities that the children can participate, more resources the children can access and more teachers and variety of peers to stimulate each child. Combined with careful observation of the skillsets and developmental milestones of each child, we can more readily assist and challenge the children to reach their potential. Our newly introduced group times are a perfect example of this. There are three learning groups and children are placed in these depending on the stage they are at within their learning journey. They are free to move around if they find other group activities to be more engaging for them.

Hope you have enjoyed this short article. Next newsletter we will aim to talk about our extension to school program and what makes children school ready. Hope you have a fantastic summer. Ka Kite Ano – Helen.



# Parent teacher night

We would like to invite all our families to a parent-teacher evening on Friday the 5th of February 6pm-7:30pm.

This will be a fun night for the children with movies and popcorn, and a great opportunity for you to meet our new teachers as well as the management team.

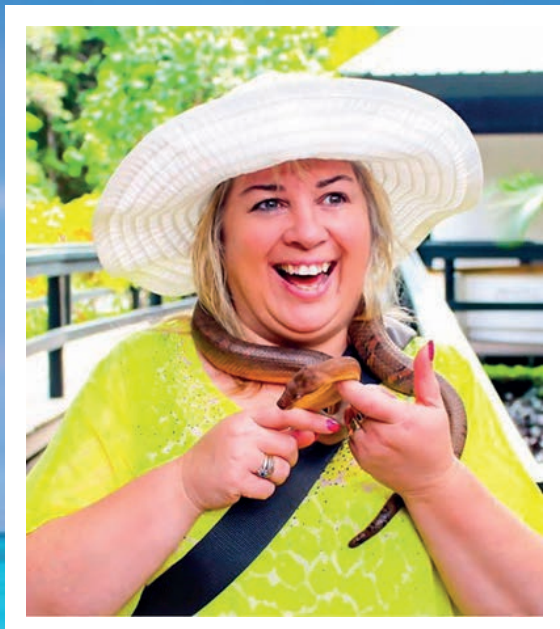
We would also love to share our plans for the centre in 2016 and talk about the exciting changes we have made to the centre to date.

Coffee and nibbles will be provided. Please register with Helen if you would like to attend. Look forward to seeing you there!





# WE WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU OUR NEW TODDLER TEAM LEADER MICHELLE



**Michelle**

**Hi, my name is Michelle!**

I am the new team leader for the toddler age group. I have worked with children for over 20 years, in both Primary and in Early childhood education. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Education and Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (Primary) as well as my full registration in Early Childhood Education.

I am passionate about providing a nurturing, stimulating and safe learning environment for all children. I have a holistic approach and recognise the importance of all aspects of a child's life in their welfare, development, self esteem and learning. I believe in children leading the way in their learning, extending their interests and extending their developing skills. I believe that play is a child's work and that learning occurs during developmentally appropriate, child-centered activities.

I believe in positive reinforcement and actively facilitate children's learning through encouragement, promotion and reinforcement of children's exploration and questioning, which in turn leads to skill development and discovery. I have been happily married to my husband Tony for 27 years and we have 2 adult children. I love spending time with my family and friends and I enjoy reading, movies, photography, art, music and travelling. I look forward to getting to know the children and their families.

## Lighthouse Early Learning Centre

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