

Chain Reaction Newsletter : August 2009

**MT DRUITT LEARNING GROUND
NEWS AND VIEWS
MAY - JULY 2009**



TERM 3 - RESTORE, PRESERVE AND ACTION

The Physical Me

In Aboriginal traditional thinking in May we were approaching the time of year calling for time to restore, and preserve. At Learning Ground we examined restoring and refreshing our thinking about our bodies and our minds, the *Physical Me* and the

Intellectual Me.

We had discussions around diet, healthy foods, healing and cleansing foods, bush tucker and all that is needed for a safe and healthy lifestyle. We talked about keeping our bodies and especially the brain active. We considered too the kinds of exercise we need to keep fit and healthy. At Learning Ground, we enjoy a game of footy at lunch time.

The Intellectual Me

Through journal writing, discussion, role-plays and sculpture making we expand how the *Intellectual Me*, the part of me that thinks can grow and we looked at the value of dreamtime stories in our lives as we read and learned about showers and thunder, wet and storms as well as fish, shellfish, kangaroos, wallabies and emu and what these stories have to tell us about the dreamtime as well as in the now understanding our way forward. Participants were pleased to examine the effects of genetic inheritance, environment and personal choice in the way we use our brains to develop our skills and prepare to become ready to return to school or job.

We looked at ways to make active decisions about preserving our bodies and our minds for healthy living and developing good learning skills.

Suggestions:

Eat vegetables and fruit every day

Thomas (14)

Sleep regular hours, before 10pm
Less junk food
Read to your young children every day
Exercise regularly
Don't drink alcohol when young
If you know alcohol is a problem in the family don't touch it!

Dale, mother
Wayne, father
Veronica, mother
Ryan (13)
Tyson (14)
Joe, father

EXCURSION TO ART GALLERY OF NSW

As part of our learning about restoring and preserving, we considered these ideas not only in human terms but also how beautiful things such as works of art can be restored and preserved for a long time for people to see and enjoy.

Guides were very interesting in explaining features of some of the Old Masters and talking through methods of restoration and preservation. Participants did themselves proud with intelligent and articulate questions.

Participant 1: This is like looking into the mind of the painter, as if he was still alive. - Boy (14)

Participant 2: This place (the gallery) must be like a real palace. - Girl (13)



From the Aboriginal Art Exhibition, Winsome (Learning Ground Project Manager) was able to help us understand much of the meaning within the paintings and to appreciate their stories within the story lines. Many of our participants clearly felt a sense of pride in belonging to or knowing about Australia's first nation exhibiting such amazing works of art. A clear sense of valuing who we are and the beauty around us contributed much to the benefits of the excursion.

SKILLS PASSPORT

Some of the ideas around FUTURE and connected to the value of taking ACTION following the notion of restoration and preservation.

QUESTION: In a future or a new career, what would I like to do for a living?

ANSWER:

- Hairdressing - Girl (13)
- Childcare - Girl (14), Boy (13)
- Postman - Boy (15)
- Actor - Girl (14)
- Return to study - Mother of 4
- Community work - Father/Mentor
- Working around art - Father
- Musician - Boy (14)
- Professional Footballer - Boy (14)

QUESTION: What skills would I need to fulfil the dream?

ANSWER:

- Finish Year 10
- Go to TAFE
- Practise hard
- Get the breaks
- Have someone speak for me
- Work hard
- Not give up

TERM 3

Will take us into further development of the *WHOLE ME*, already we have started talk about the *EMOTIONAL ME* and are examining FEELING. What they mean, where they come from, if they have any morality and what we can do with decisions we make about feelings. In Term 3, we will examine what we can do about managing anger and will also plan a Skills Picnic at Mt Druitt TAFE. Lots of fun to be had by all and some great learning too.

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER LEARNING GROUND?

Any families from 2770 postcode.

- If you would like to consider further studies or new studies but don't feel quite up to it yet.
- If you have a family member who is having difficulties staying at school at the moment.
- If you are experiencing family problems and would like some support to build relationships with partners and or children.
- If you would like to build up your self esteem.
- If you would like to seek paid or volunteer work but feel unsure about how to go about it just yet.

We are a little different in that we work within families so to come to Learning Ground an adult must bring a young person or a young person must bring a responsible adult, that is someone agreed by the family, who can come every week with the supported young one. Adults must be over 18 and willing to undergo Safety Checks required.

You'll love it - come along and try it.

COMMENTS FROM TERM 2 PARTICIPANTS

- "After I left Learning Ground in 2007, I stuffed up at home and school but I had a feeling they would take me back and now I am trying so hard" - Adolescent Girl
- "If it wasn't for Learning Ground and their care about me and my mother, I would be in the lock up now" - Adolescent Boy
- "I see what we do here in Learning Ground and know that my son wouldn't be in jail today if we had had Learning Ground when he was a boy" - Volunteer Mentor
- " I've been away for some time having my baby and all that but I was welcomed back

Mother/Mentor

- "I look forward to Learning Ground every week. It sets me up for being with the kids at school for the rest of the week" - LG Mentor and School Liaison Teacher

Contact:

Winsome Matthews
Mt Druitt Learning Ground
0414 151 079
MDLG@chainreaction.org.au



Margaret Bell
Chain Reaction Foundation
1800 614 014
info@chainreaction.org.au



Mt Druitt Learning Ground is a project of Chain Reaction Foundation and is working towards becoming incorporated and self sustainable.

PO Box 1593 Neutral Bay NSW 2089
T: 1800 614 014

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