Hello everyone,

Well what a lovely day it was! I’d like to thank all of those parents who put in so much time and effort on Sunday. I know there were lots of you who did much more than your fair share and I’d like to say a special thank you to all of you. All of the feedback has been that our Fair had a wonderful feeling about it that reflected the Steiner and Reggio spirit of the school community. The focus on student performances and children’s activities in and amongst our beautiful grounds makes our Fair unique – and very, very special.

I’ve really struggled to write this newsletter because behind the many smiles there was some pain that really needs mentioning. I’m not sure this side of the Fair has been widely mentioned before but for me as a first time Fair organiser, the volunteer turn out was disappointing and I found the consequences heartbreaking. As well as parent volunteers running from one stall to another to fill gaps in the rosters, some not only missed simply being at the Fair with their children, they missed their child’s performance because to leave their stall would mean the stall would be unattended.

The SRC did a good job helping Carolyn with the unpleasant task of the bins but because of a lack of other volunteers, students from Balwyn High did the fun job of running the ice cream stall. Two volunteers from Beraldo Coffee in Northcote staffed the coffee machine for most of the day and one of the stalls was cancelled altogether because no one turned up to run it. Keir Jasper’s mum and dad sat in the treasury all day and we only had a silent auction because a new parent who as of today has been at the school for a total of eight weeks, stepped up to run it.

Those of us packing up were very disheartened by the loss of a skateboard belonging to one of the parents who along with his partner, worked hard at the Fair all day. It was stolen from the canteen while they helped with the clean up. The skateboard was black on the top and multicoloured on the bottom. We would appreciate the skateboard being returned to the office immediately. In any case, Tim, the parent who made the banners, has started a fund to help replace it. There’s $20 in a jar at the office. All contributions would be appreciated.

It also needs to be noted that the wood splitter that was purchased for the wood fire pizzas and that was carefully guarded all day by volunteers on the pizza oven, was taken and broken the moment someone turned their back.
I know this is a bit gloomy after such a sunny day but I think it’s important to be honest. It was a lovely day and in terms of an open day and fundraiser it went well. Speaking as a parent, I see the Fair as a symbol of what our school community stands for - it’s our public event and the fundraising goes towards those programs. Many of us choose this school for our children for of its Steiner and Reggio values. Some of you might have come to a Spring Fair and decided on this school so there’s a certain irony that we created such an amazing feeling of community spirit with so few members of our community. It’s a credit to all of those wonderful people who gave so much on Sunday.

The Spring Fair has only been running for seven years yet the same parents have been setting up the big marquee, collecting equipment from other schools and cleaning up afterwards for every Fair. This year, some of those people have resigned. They’ve not actually been to a Fair and done an hour’s shift on a stall then kicked back for the rest of the afternoon with their children. They’ve taken time off work, asked their staff to work on Fair posters and used their printers to print them. They’ve used their cars and trailers and money for petrol. Those same people are the first to arrive and the last to leave every working bee and Fair day. Now their children are coming to the end of high school and it’s time for them to hand over the reigns. Hopefully we can build a bigger group of volunteers to share the load.

Every year we burn our volunteers out because there are too few to do all of the things that need to be done. On Sunday my six year old daughter gave her first piano recital by heart and without her book because I was spread too thin to remember to pack it, Mary was only able to hear her daughter sing because the program was running slightly over. Some of our regular volunteers have never seen their children perform at Spring Fair – not in seven years. There are lots of stories about parents missing their child’s performance altogether. Who would volunteer again after that?

In short, our school community needs to think very carefully about our Spring Fair. The Fair raises much needed money that goes towards our children’s education. In January next year, we must have a conversation about what the Spring Fair means to our school. I urge you all to participate in that process; the people who volunteered this and every other year deserve nothing less, not to mention our children.

In the meantime I encourage every class to donate a fruit tree to our garden. There are some 389 families who received seven coloured paper newsletters of several pages each in the lead up to the Fair. Every tree will help offset the footprint made in organising this year’s Spring Fair. It would only take a donation of fifty cents per child. Trees can be delivered to the office and we’ll talk to the teachers about organising a tree planting ceremony so each class can plant their tree.
Our Spring Fair is about the children. Everything we do is geared towards them. From what I can tell, there is no other inner city school fair like it. There were four performance stages, the Battle of the Bands was huge, the woodwork went off, the Viking Ship almost ran out of prizes to fish for, the juice stall sold out of lemonade and the skate park, though expensive paid for itself after a young boy who had been loitering finally gathered the courage to ask about the price. Disappointed he didn’t have the $5, the guys from the YMCA called to ask if it was ok if he had a go anyway. That young boy got to do something that he would otherwise not have been able to do – and he learned something. This is what it’s all about. There are lots of great stories like that from the day.

Again, I’d like to say thank you to all of those people who did so much more than the one small thing I originally asked everyone to do towards the Fair. I know your faces if not your names. There are teachers and staff too who did more than their share on the day.

Thanks to Dale’s son Nicholas who needs extra pocket money this week after walking the grounds with a megaphone making announcements before and after joining those fabulous senior school boys who spun the Fairy Floss all day. And to the people in treasury and to those cooking sausages and making juice and curries and then to the people who sorted, carted and sold books and clothes; to those who made badges, painted and buried rocks, and ran a café especially for kids. Thanks to Lyn whose name badge flashed past me as she tirelessly bussed dirty dishes from the canteen and marquee back to the kitchen, it was lovely to see her still standing and chatting with friends at the end of the day; and to Eilish who worked all day without a break helping a continuous line of children fish off the Viking Ship. To those who helped the prep to 3’s make about 200 metres of bunting and signs and hang decorations; to those people who came to Friday craft mornings all year for the Made With Love stall and to the parents, staff and students who made preserves, cakes, chai and dukkah. Finally thanks to Ivan Parrett for his crazy funny emails and Errol for those amazing spiced rolls and then of course to all the people I’ve missed. Next time, walk away from your stall, there’s nothing more important than making it to see your children perform.

Extra special thanks to Anna McKie who organised the auctions with such short notice and Trevor who tried so hard to create a work-life balance by coming to working bees before and after cricket on what are supposed to be his week ends off. To Erica Lienert and Zana Fraillon who started months ago asking for donations for auction items even though their class wasn’t responsible for the auction, to Anna O’Brien who spent all year running the Beehive Craft Group, to Kathy Miller who organised a lovely array of stallholders and to Carolyn Shurey who greened our rubbish. To Liria Stratus who worked tirelessly energising not only our students but those from other schools – and teachers too. To Sophie Gaur for her beautiful artwork and to Sapphira Butler, Kier Jasper and Tim Arundell for their amazing support and to the other staff whose work we couldn’t have done without. And to Mary Gardiner who does so much that no one sees, and to all of her friends and relatives who volunteer every year to do most of the preparation and pack up of the Fair – as well as helping to fill rosters on the day.
Please don’t mistake me, it was a lovely day but with just 20 (or 30!) more volunteers everyone could have had a lovely day. I started writing this on the Monday after the Fair. It’s my immediate response from the point of view of a parent volunteer and it’s my feedback to you, the school community. I’m writing a report on the Fair and I’m interested in receiving constructive advice and observations in return. If you couldn’t join us in the canteen for the annual Spring Fair Debrief the Friday afterwards, then please send feedback to me at wottelse@yahoo.com.au

Tina (m: 0438 176 635 e: wottelse@yahoo.com.au)

Many thanks for the generous support of:

22 High St Northcote, tel: 9482 2899

Say thanks when you present this voucher at PET stock Clifton Hill:
LAST THINGS TO DO

1. Collection Of Auction Items
   If you were lucky enough to win in one of the auction items, please make
   arrangements to pay and collect your item as soon as you can.

   **Credit card payments can be accepted by the office on**
   **Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.**
   **Cash payments can be accepted any day from 8am to 4pm.**

2. Invoices & Receipts
   All invoices and receipts must be received by the office by **THIS Friday 11th November.**
   Again, we need to finalise the Spring Fair account as soon as possible.

3. Missing Skateboard
   A parent volunteer who worked all day and then stayed to help pack up the Fair
   had his skateboard stolen from the canteen. Obviously it would be best if the
   board were returned however that’s unlikely. Tim, the parent who worked on the
   banners has started a kitty with $20 and Marion just added $10 to help replace
   the board. There’s a tin in the office, I'll think you'll agree that it's a worthwhile
   cause.

4. Lost Wallet
   A young visitor to our Fair lost his wallet, it was plain black and while it didn’t have
   much money in it, it was very precious. The wallet belongs to Jett Rhodes and his
   name may be somewhere on the inside. If anyone finds a wallet please return it to the
   office as soon as possible.

5. Tree Planting Ceremonies
   To offset the footprint made by organising the Fair, I’m asking every class to consider
   purchasing a fruit tree to plant in the school garden. Trees can be delivered to the
   office, please label them with the class name and we’ll speak to the teachers about
   having a tree planting ceremony during which the children can plant their tree.

6. Spring Fair Report
   I’m compiling a report on the Fair and putting together a Spring Fair Kit of what,
   when and how things need to be done. Hopefully it will make the job of volunteers
   less daunting.

   **All stallholders please provide me with the report on your stall by**
   **Wednesday 16th November.**
7. Feedback for the Fair Report

The things I’m interested in for the report are as follows:

- What volunteers did and when (so we can make a calendar)
- A list of goods and equipment (signs, trestles, chairs etc) required including quantities and a list of donors and donations
- A copy of your roster sheet
- Feedback on what sold well and what didn’t
- Any other feedback or observation
- Please include anything you think could make your stall – and the Fair, easier or better

- Also, if you didn’t volunteer - or volunteered and didn’t show up, please tell me what would make you think about it differently next year

All feedback is welcome.

If you have any constructive advice or observations about this year's Fair, please email me at wottelse@yahoo.com.au

8. End of Year Spring Fair Market

Towards the end of the year we’re thinking about having a stall at the Thursday afternoon market. We’ll be selling the jams, preserves, tea and crafts left over from the Fair. Please read the e-news for more details.

9. Applications for Fair Funds

Each class and group has an opportunity to apply for funds from the Spring Fair to buy equipment or to run a project or event. The criteria for applications will be published in the e-news. In the meantime please collect and pay for your auction items as we can’t count your contribution or distribute the funds until we have all of the money raised in the Spring Fair account!

10. Thank You

Thanks again to all of those people who volunteered on Sunday, it was a really lovely day and the sun made all of our hard work shine. Thanks too to those people who played spot the typo and made the effort to read and respond to the newsletters that were sent to every family in the last couple of months. I’d also like to say a personal thank you to the Reggio Prep/One families and teachers who have been a tremendous support for my family this year. It’s been a pleasure to work alongside Mary Gardiner and to get to know so many wonderful people in our school community. Thank you!