

Nau mai | Welcome

Nau mai and welcome to GREENchat for Term 2, 2021. We hope you enjoy this short round-up of some of the mahi that has been going on in our local schools and kindergartens lately.

Writing just after the winter solstice and a succession of wintery wet weekends, summer really does seem like a distant memory. That's why it's lovely to share the sunny story of Renwick Kindergarten's new solar panels and the community effort that has gone into making their big vision a reality.

Many of you will be celebrating Matariki at this time - we would love to hear or see how you have marked this occasion with your students and wider school and kindergarten whānau.

As you get into planning for Term 3, don't forget to take a look at how we can support you on the MDC website:

► www.marlborough.govt.nz/environment/environmental-education/school-education-programmes

You might want to check in on our Enviroschools websites and our padlet collections too:

► www.enviroschoolsmarlborough.co.nz
► enviroschools.org.nz
► padlet.com/EnviroschoolsMarlborough/MarlboroughMenu

Ngā manaakitanga,
Annie, Angela & Anna
The MDC Education Team

Kindergarten powered by Tama-nui-te-rā!

After Renwick Kindergarten reflected at Green-Gold in 2019, the kindergarten community was inspired to investigate renewable energy sources: both as a way of future-proofing for generations to come, and minimizing their environmental impact. After lots of meetings and discussions, the decision was made to go solar.



Making use of Tama-nui-te-rā (the sun) - who nearly always shines on Marlborough - seemed such a natural option. The kindergarten partnered with Harrison's Solar to install the panels. As a local, family-owned business, Harrison's are a past whānau for the kindergarten, and they were actively involved in raising the funds well before the project went out for tender.

Being able to see in real-time the power generated by the solar panels and what the kindergarten consumes has been an amazing opportunity for the kaiako and tamariki to further their learning for sustainability. They have been able to carry out science investigations and experiments while at the same time learning about energy conservation. The Enviroschools Guiding Principle of Sustainable Communities has been at the heart of this project from day one, and staff and tamariki feel incredibly lucky to be a part of such an amazing, generous community that supported them to get this vision off the ground, and onto their roof!

Kaitiaki Group visit Shakespeare Bay



Picton School's Kaitiaki Group were invited by Port Marlborough in conjunction with Cawthron Institute to visit the Shakespeare Bay estuary as a focus for NZAEE Seaweek in March.

Scientists from Cawthron had set up a range of activities to help the group study the estuary. Anika, Dana and Robyn each took a group of students to look for cool creatures, slimy seaweed, beautiful birds and slippery snails.

Dana demonstrated how to take a mud sample and search through it to find any critters living below the surface. Anika spoke about why the estuary is important to Māori and taught us the Māori kupu for the creatures we found.

The group would like to thank Port Marlborough and Cawthron Institute for the chance to experience some hands-on science in this special local place. For their next steps, they plan to return to do a beach clean-up in the area.

Autumn leaves: super food for compost and fun to play in too!

Without a doubt, collecting up bags of autumn leaves is one of the favourite activities for the tamariki in Kids' Edible Gardens each autumn and winter. Leaves can be layered into the compost bin, used directly as mulch in garden beds, or left in bags to make leaf litter by kick-starting the decomposition process.

Springlands School went one step further and built three huge leaf cages to hold their autumn leaves. Once they have started to decompose they will be used to feed the soil in their garden beds. This is one way that Kids' Edible Gardens create a closed-loop, composting and recycling garden waste to provide natural nutrients for their gardens.



ECE centres take part in Enviroschools pilot

Four ECE centres are currently taking part in an Enviroschools pilot. This term, kaiako took part in a teacher workshop and followed this up with visits to Seymour and Renwick Kindergartens to see Enviroschools in action.

Renwick shared the pepeha, karakia and tiriti that they have developed to connect to their special places and values. Outside, they showed the group their strawberry walls and multi-purpose hut area. They also shared their learning around energy and the newly installed solar panels. Seymour showed the group their bike track, new composting area, butterfly house and the beautiful community-created mural that represents the things that are special to them.

It was so inspiring for the teachers to see the variety of ways that these kindergartens are incorporating education for sustainability into their places, practices and programmes. They left bursting with ideas!



Redwoodtown School flying high



It was hard to miss the enormous hot air balloon bobbing up and down above Redwoodtown School last month. The school was visited by the Flying High Charitable Trust, which aims to provide opportunities to inspire and guide young people towards a more sustainable future through its education programme and use of an innovative and positive approach.

The hot air balloon created a real buzz and gave children a bird's eye view of their school and community, along with a broader perspective on some everyday problems. Students explored how they could use this different perspective to come up with innovative and practical solutions to problems such as our use of non-renewable energy and single-use plastics.

What an exciting way to challenge students' thinking on these big and important topics...we look forward to seeing Redwoodtown School's next steps!

Taylor River: feeling the love!

Blenheim students have been loving their river lately: learning about it, connecting with its natural spaces and raising awareness about how we can all take care of it.

With its handy proximity to many schools, the Taylor River has long been used as a location for place-based learning and connecting with nature. Students learn how to investigate river health and discover the variety of interesting creatures that live in the awa through MDC's Freshwater Education programme. Bio-blitzes have catalogued the diversity of plants and animals that live in the river corridor through the Enviroschools programme. River-inspired poems written by school students are displayed along the Taylor River Writers' Walk. Blue plastic fish have been installed beside surrounding road drains, reminding us that these drains empty directly into the river. Planting projects have enhanced the river reserve area and stabilised the river banks.

A number of schools take an active and ongoing role in caring for the Taylor River: whether through regularly picking up rubbish in the area or by spreading messages of how we can take better care of this special place. Students often make signs, artwork or posters to share with the wider community: like these ones made by students from Richmond View School after they did a stream study at the river in Term 1.



Taylor River Hiko

Following a successful pilot with Year 7 & 8 students at Richmond View School, we are now pleased to be able to offer a new 'Taylor River Hiko' session as part of MDC's Freshwater Education programme.

This facilitated session takes the format of a guided walk – walking along the river pathway stopping at selected points to talk, observe or do short activities – and can be customised to fit your needs and time availability.

Possible content includes river health, caring for the river, history of the river, nature connections or writing inspiration – or you might like to cover a mixture of topics.

Please contact Anna to find out more or book your session: email apcrowe@icloud.com



Our team

There are three of us working in the MDC education team to support you and your students, as well as Ramona Millen, who facilitates the EnviroSchools programme in kindergartens. We also have some talented people in our organisation and community that we can link you with, and good connections with the team at DOC.



Annie McDonald | Education Officer & EnviroSchools Regional Coordinator

Annie is an educator, has taught at primary and secondary schools, and is passionate about showing schools how they can integrate education for sustainability into the curriculum. She gets a thrill from working with students to grow environmental leaders.



Angela Wentworth | Environmental Educator

Angela is a horticulturalist, and regularly has her hands in the soil with students. She also trains our Kids' Edible Gardens facilitators and supports schools with inquiry learning into things green.



Anna Crowe | Environmental Educator

Anna is a scientist and is pretty good in a pair of gumboots, sharing her knowledge and expertise of the watery world. She also manages our digital communications, and supports schools on their environmental journey.

Coming up

STORY STUDIO LIVE 2021

This year, Story Studio LIVE is based on the themes of climate change and the environment. It promises to showcase the diverse stories of young people in an engaging show that can be performed in your school hall.

This year, we will navigate the topics of climate change in a sensitive way, maintaining the wellbeing/hauora of students. We invite you to use this production as a platform to help you explore these critical topics in your own classroom.

This theatre project features professional actors and technicians and highlights the voices of our young people. Story Studio LIVE will show your students how far their ideas and imagination can go, inspiring the next generation of writers, actors, scientists, journalists and creative thinkers!



- Price \$1 per child (minimum charge of \$100)
- In Marlborough area on 9-10 August 2021

Book here:

<https://form.jotform.com/203267577472867>



**Shaping
our
Tomorrow**

**NZAEE has big plans,
and some more funding...**

We want to hear what tomorrow looks like for teachers, providers and researchers, so that NZAEE can help more ākongā learn about, live in, and love the natural environment.

Join us on Wednesday 21 July 3pm-5:30pm
via Zoom or in local groups

To register and get more detail, please go to

<https://events.humanitix.com/shaping-our-tomorrow>



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future at your school**



Te Uru Rākau—New Zealand Forest Service and Trees That Count are thrilled to give every primary school in Aotearoa New Zealand the opportunity to claim five free native seedlings to plant on your school grounds!

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