

Dr. Nicola Chisnall Memorial Award

Montessori House of Children, Hamilton

In the aftermath of Christchurch terror attack our centre decided to show our love support and care to those who have suffered and to reach out to our local community in Hamilton. We believed that although young, our 3-6 tamariki are able to learn how to reach out to a person or a group who is suffering.



Montessori education is an education for peace. We have taken this opportunity to promote a deeper understanding of peace, social justice and harmony after the Christchurch mosque attack. As it happened in New Zealand and was unprecedented we saw this an opportunity to reach out the community in Christchurch.

We explained our tamariki that some people had been hurt, we could reach out to them to tell them we loved them. This led to the discussion on how we could do it. The idea of the 'Montessori Peace Song' and 'One people one planet song' was suggested to be sung. In consultation with our whanau and kaiako we organised a trip to the local Mosque where our tamariki put up the poster they made and sang the peace song.

We also participated in the Hijab day alongside our whanau.

At the team meeting we discussed how we can further promote our message of peace and love and a team member came up with the idea of doing a collection of toys where children can



choose a toy, they would like to give to the children at An-Nur Childcare, Christchurch. In this way we could involve our tamariki and their families.

We made the video of the songs, visited the local Mosque with our tamariki, kaiako and whanau. We also celebrated the National Hijab day.



We started the collection of toys' donations.

Children also participated in a video that was made for the victims and their families by Nimbus media, LDS Church and Wintec Studio. The families were actively involved in the Mosque visit and toy collection.

The people at the Mosque were involved in organising the Mosque visit.

We were in touch with An-Nur Childcare team. The Church Choir sang the Peace Song, a local media company and WINTEC studio also participated. We also shared our video with Al Noor Masjid people.



We all have realised the importance of promoting peace not just inside our classroom but in the wider community. We have seen our tamariki developing a better understanding of kindness. Being kind is the first rule in our classroom and children have been able to learn different ways of being kind. We aim to daily allow time to consider and discuss how we look after ourselves, our classmates (grace courtesy, respect of each other and our environment). Therefore, using kind words, we discussed how unkind words affect our feelings like unkind actions that cause physical pain.

We had positive outcomes as we were not sure how families would respond to our proposal to visit the mosque considering the age group we have, the response we got was positive, some parents came with us and more wanted to send their children.



This experience has opened the door to opportunities and the need to nurture and promote kindness in our interaction with each other and the wider community.

The response from the Church Choir and our families has been overwhelming. We will continue the relationship with the *An-Nur Childcare, Mosque* and with our local preschools around us. We see this as an opportunity to initiate a social action to address the issues of child poverty in New Zealand, promote equity, empathy and aroha in our country.

Find ways to be involved and contribute in community events at the church and mosque. Buddy system within our classroom. Using special events to invite other preschools closer to us and building strong bonds. Connecting with preschools who have high need families.

With consistent work there is a possibility of building long lasting relationships with local preschools not just as a centre but by connecting families as they can have lasting relationships.

