







We are pleased to share this glimpse into the life and learning at Kindlehill School in early 2022. Threaded across the articles is the deeply enlivening quality of the education. This year our thematic focus is *Restore*. After a torrid two years of isolation and restrictions, we want to do something beautifully social, ecological and healthful. Essentially, our focus is on restoring relationships with one another, with the soil, with nature and with community.

Lynn Daniel, Principal



The Magic of Kindy Morning Circle

KIRSTY EDWARDS, KINDY GARDEN TEACHER

Each morning in Kindy we come together for a shared Morning Circle. We gather on the mat, and we plant our roots firmly into the ground, ready to stand firm and strong in the world. We send up our shoots and branches into the sky, allowing our good deeds and kindness to stream outward.

Tall as a tree I stand,
Far reach my roots into the Earth.
My branches bend and bow
With Love

Our Morning Circle reflects the environment that surrounds us. Rather than following the seasons purely by date, we celebrate each one by recognising the changes in colours and smells within our Kindy Garden. We observe the insects and birds that visit, and we notice our own changes in what we wear and eat. With the wet weather we will sing up the rain and the creatures that enjoy it. Through song and movement, we fall as an autumn leaf and grow as slowly as a mushroom. In the Morning Circle, the children love to revisit and hear their

favourite songs and poems throughout particular times of the year. Most of these songs and verses have been written by Kindyhill teachers and some are as old as the school, having been shared amongst generations of students.

As a teacher, the Morning Circle is a time to gather and meet. It offers the chance for me to catch the twinkle in each child's eye. We sing and breathe together and find our Kindy Rhythm that will carry us through the day.



Colour and Form in Class 1–2

PIPPITA BENNETT, CLASS 1–2 TEACHER

In the early years of Primary School, colour permeates everything we create. The children relish the nuances of colour change in the rainbow and organise their crayons and pencils in rainbow order. When a child of 7 or 8 draws a picture from the day's story their imagination fills the page with colour.

At this age children are also finding delight in repeated patterns and form. You will often find a Class 1-2 drawing containing seven identical butterflies but each of a different colour of the rainbow. In their craft the Class 1-2 child can repeat geometric shapes and patterns to create functional and artistically beautiful pieces.

The connection that children make with colour deeply nourishes their feeling life which is so essential to creating a love of beauty and the world around them. When a child is full of love of the world, they feel a part of it. When we love, that is when we feel connected and want to live in and create a happy, healthy environment. Similarly, when a child sees patterns of the world, they realise that there is order in nature and they begin to make sense of the world. Enjoy these delights from the hands of Class 1-2.





The Skipping Child — oh, Joy!

JOHN DANIEL, CLASS 3-4 TEACHER

While I was driving, I saw a young child skipping along the path. It was so purely joyful that I was overwhelmed, choked up.

There are moments when you get a glimpse into the play of young children entirely immersed in the imagination that they are living in.

These are the forces that powerfully live in children.

As teachers, we wish to entice the children: "Let us introduce you to the world in all of its manifest dimensions".

The children reply: "Yes! But remember, our gift is our vibrant imagination, our bursting life."

So we endeavour to make the learning a lived experience, one that moves the feelings, so that the child unconsciously feels like, "I am part of this story, with my head, heart and hands".

The Class 3-4 children have been travelling with the swaggie Happy Harry as he retraces the many paths that he has tramped over his long life. Along the way, we have encountered many geographical and geological features, and the ways

that humans have lived and made a living in these places. We have drawn maps and cross-sections, painted underwater worlds, had quizzes, completed drawings containing the minutiae of every place and person that Harry visited, and recited robust and rhythmic verses about those adventures and songs about the same. We then visited many of those places on our class camp, and then drew all of this together in a class play, where we enacted Harry's journey.

I have a knowledge of this world; I love this world, with all of its goods and not-so-goods. I feel myself in the stream of human endeavour and I have a part to play. I am an integral and purposeful part of this world.



Class play: the raucous bridge builders



Class Play: Happy Harry on his journey



The Sun

ERICA CHAPERLIN, CLASS 5-6 TEACHER

Class 5-6 went out west recently for a week-long camp to Nangar National Park. So, to answer the questions asked of us in Mary Oliver's poem:

It really was wonderful to see the sun, and to feel it tickle our backs. We absolutely felt the wild love for it. It was delicious.

We walked, whittled, waded, and water-coloured our way through each day bathed in the warmth of that golden light. Each day rolled into the next and before we knew it the last day had arrived.

*The SUN shimmered her magic
for a whole week.*

The SUN allowed us to go slow.

*The SUN gave us room to
breathe and just be.*

*The SUN made us still, and silly and
we savoured every sweet moment.*

So no, dear Mary Oliver, we have not gone crazy for power, for things. We have not turned from this world but into it, and sunny camps really are the way we can do that.

Try it.



The Sun

Have you ever seen
anything
in your life
more wonderful

than the way the sun,
every evening,
relaxed and easy,
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds or the hills,
or the rumpled sea,
and is gone—
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,
every morning,
on the other side of the world,
like a red flower

streaming upward on its heavenly oils,
say, on a morning in early summer,
at its perfect imperial distance—
and have you ever felt for anything
such wild love—
do you think there is anywhere, in any language,
a word billowing enough
for the pleasure

that fills you,
as the sun
reaches out,
as it warms you

as you stand there,
empty-handed—
or have you too
turned from this world—

or have you too
gone crazy
for power,
for things?

— Mary Oliver



BOOK RELEASE

Kindling the Light

Schooling for Wonder, Compassion and Moral Courage

Told in the words of those who mixed the mud and carved the beams, who built the cubbies and wrote the songs, who tend the gardens and light the fires, Kindling the Light is a joyful and optimistic antidote to all the crises we face. It proves the power of community and offers a glimpse of a different and more beautiful future.

"Rarely as an educator, have I held a book, which from cover to cover kept me spellbound; with its portrayal of a school that in the author's words has been sent from the future. This book is a must read for anyone interested in creating schools that nurture the intrinsic essence of humanity, with all its transformational potential for good in the world. We see how at Kindlehill School a child-centred inspiring, creative curriculum enables each pupil to be the best and most fulfilled person that they can be. 'Kindling the Light' has inspired me to see how schools can transform education, when both educators and parents deeply understand how children best learn and create the conditions for them to be in harmony with themselves, others and our natural world".

Dr. Neil Hawkes, Founder of Values-based Education

"This book is so precious, so strong, so forward facing! The story of a school, risen up and out of the earth, with passion, loving dedicated work and a belief in the greatest good. I read 'Kindling the Light' feeling so grateful for each and every teacher, parent and student that said 'yes'.

I have a warmth within knowing that the students of Kindlehill form a constellation that reaches out into the world, breathing and shining goodness.

There is so much richness to explore and absorb in these pages: the motivations and commitments of the teachers, the depth and breadth of the school experience, and the care and love that surrounds each child.

Thank you for sharing this story which holds so many inspirations for all families and communities looking to be part of a more nourishing life and world".

Sarah van Erp, Bush School educator, Sydney

"What a joy to read this wonderful book! It's beautifully constructed, well written and hasn't missed a single aspect of Kindlehill's development over its 21 years. It's obviously been an enormous undertaking, but the final result is full of love and attention to detail. Congratulations to Kindlehill. I enjoyed every page."

Glenys Ferguson, haiku poet and fabric artist

Kindling the Light

Schooling for wonder,
compassion and moral courage

If you are interested in purchasing a copy, please contact the school office at community@kindlehill.nsw.edu.au or 47574402. Copies are \$20.

The Tree Speaks

GEORGIA ADAMSON, HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA TEACHER

Our Term 1 Drama unit in Class 9-10 revisited the physical work we were developing pre-Covid and married it with a fresh exploration of language, the power of chorus and playing with alternate perspectives in storytelling. In her poem, A Tree Telling of Orpheus, Denise Levertov gives voice to the trees' encounter with Orpheus and his music; the combination of physical and verbal expression was the perfect way to step into a tale being told with a perspective other than our own.

Choreography, perhaps like the task of the illustrator of a picture book, is an interesting balance between depicting what is said and expressing elements of the tale not told in words. The class stepped up to the challenge, contributing beautiful insights into moments that lifted us out of 'recitation with actions' and into a layered expression of the poem.

As our rehearsals came to their conclusion, one of our Year 10 students wrote a poem in Geography in which he talked about trees knowing how music is made "since they have the biggest orchestra in the world." It is a heart-warming affirmation of the way our students learn to see that depth of crossover between subjects, and to witness such beautiful insights and imaginings in our students.

Our performance for friends and families was the finale to an evening of beautiful music, a fitting combination given the subject of our poem. Students performed solo, in duos, trios and a band, and it was joyous to be in a room sharing our creativity again, witnessing the growth and blossoming of this group of young people.





Geography on the Road Trip, Class 9–10

LYNN DANIEL, HIGH SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY TEACHER

Seek to not only see the forest
but to find the forest within.

As I reflect on the trip, I celebrate and feel the exhilaration of seeing young people connect to ocean, forest, ancient culture and land, as well as to one another. I sense deeply how important this is in our transitioning time. Yet I confess the trip was for me, a little bit heartbreaking, too. The evidence of fires and flood were ever present, as was the shrinking habitat for wildlife and the impacts of our heating planet. Finding the forest within means not only finding the 18 million years-old rainforest with its pristine beauty, but also acknowledging the grief of Country and of more-than-human kin.

We travelled over 2,000 kilometres. We had iconic experiences from being dumped in surf, to swimming in the big rivers. Independence and a sense of agency take an exponential leap during these extended camps, and for the Geography teacher, there is so much contextual learning to bring back into the classroom.



Learning from the Trees

The brooding giants towering to the sky.
They are the columns to my own cathedral.

As I sit beneath their green gilded
ceiling bathed in golden gleaming light,
all the wisdom that they have acquired
though hundreds of years of existence
flows into me.

All the knowledge they have from being in
the one spot

Seeing floods, fires, and droughts over
the centuries.

Now part of the tree is in me.

- Shiloh

Here are a few student reflections from our experience at Lake Mungo.

You see the red dirt, feel the cool breeze rushing through your body with force. What is now desert seeming once again to be green. You feel awakened to the beauty around you, the soft sand beneath your feet, the ancient bones emerging, you sense the Elders walking with you. You read their messages in the sky and the land.

You hear the songs, the ceremony. You smell the smoke from campfires, hear the laughter of children until you realise it's all gone. It did happen a long time ago but it's as if you are remembering the memories of the people of your family, that you are connected to, and they are speaking through you, opening your eyes to hidden messages in the world.

GABBY

I shine the sun on this place and I forget language, writing, speaking and just listen. I hear the sounds of people who have not forgotten language, creatures who speak amongst themselves, trees which rustle in wind but also make their own sounds. There are also things that don't make sound, some seen, others unseen. I cannot see the culture, the history, the remnants and the new things beginning, but if I do more than just stop speaking and peer deeper than sound, I can feel all those things around me and inside of me.

RUBEN

So bright, so warm and yet the sand is cool. The shade is sweet, the breeze carries the chill of long-ago lakes. The sun shines hot and bright but the land won't blister, even as it cracks and dries like a colonial paint, peeling away to reveal the culture beneath.

These are the bones and dunes of Nyaampa, Mutti Mutti and Paakinji Country, the flat windy plains of culture, the cool forgiving shade of acknowledgement. I don't need to shine the sun on this place; it has shone with the sun of Culture for tens of thousands of years.

TARA

Recently, we went on a two-week camp with our class...two weeks?! The most exhilarating and fun camp I've ever been on in my life, I learnt so many things and skills for a lifetime. I had the best time with my friends and hung out with people I don't usually, and learnt more about them. I learnt so much about myself and most of that will stay with me for a very long time. I learnt about cultures, places, facts, people, basic life skills, dishes, setting up, teamwork, shopping for food and many other things. I also learnt about the serious impacts the Earth is facing, and actually driving around places that are facing these impacts is a better way to get it into your brain and see what's happening.

The camp was jampacked with adventure, laughter, tears, smiles, hugs, wildlife and most of all, fun!

AIMEE



Word Gets Around

- Feedback in High School English

STEPHANIE DAWES, HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHER

"Visible teaching and learning occurs when there is deliberate practice aimed at attaining mastery of the goal, when there is feedback given and sought, and when there are active, passionate, and engaging people (teacher, students, peers) participating in the act of learning. It is teachers seeing learning through the eyes of students, and students seeing teaching as the key to their ongoing learning."

John Hattie: Visible Learning for Teachers – Maximising Impact on Learning. Routledge. London and New York 2012

The lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 saw Kindlehill High School make a rapid transition to not only learning from home, but learning online via the Microsoft 365 Teams platform. Once loaded onto our laptops and given a quick tutorial, teachers and students were able to communicate in a variety of ways, including voice chat, video classes, group messaging and subject-based posts. Whilst this allowed teachers to schedule daily online lessons, one of the most important elements of Teams was file sharing: students could see worksheets, teachers could see how work was progressing and essentially, could give students live, written feedback within the document they were working on.

Now we're back at school and lockdowns are (hopefully) a thing of the past, whilst High School still uses workbooks to handwrite, students are still regularly using Teams to type their assessment tasks. In English, this allows feedback for writing in progress, but also for students to review each others' work. Of course, each student must agree to this peer review and be mindful of the clear guidelines within the marking criteria which provide a structure for feedback. After locating at least one element that is working well and identifying what needs improving, students leave their comments within a feedback box in the document. These messages are always inspired and encouraging in their maturity and positivity and are so heartening to read. Students then reflect and amend their writing accordingly.



Whilst I see a definite improvement in students' application to a writing task when they know they will be peer reviewed, Teams also allows students to work simultaneously with teachers to more fully develop their writing via immediate feedback.

At the end of 2021, a new design for High School's recreational space was developed, which saw us farewell the old couches and embrace modular seating and tables. This new layout allows the perfect breakout space for students to work individually or in small groups, still within view of the classroom. It also provides separation for those students who need to quietly read their written work out aloud for effective revision and editing – the perfect antidote for when students become 'overfamiliar' with the words on the screen in front of them.

This new spatial configuration also allows teachers to give support to students of all abilities and give feedback in real time. With separate laptops open, teacher and student can read through the work out aloud together so the student can hear

where to edit their writing for grammar, paragraph structure and understanding.

Back in the classroom, those students who would prefer not to read through their work with the teacher can follow along in real time from the other side of the room as the teacher highlights text changes and creates prompts. The feedback is still occurring and it's immediate, though no verbal discussion is taking place. In both scenarios, students actively learn to make meaning, follow process and shape their writing.

Through the upheaval and havoc wrought by Covid over the past few years, there have been some unexpected silver linings, and now we are back in the classroom, Teams has become just that: an effective communication tool that has allowed both teachers and students to actively participate in the deliberate act of feedback. In the words of John Hattie, it is an element of "...teachers seeing learning through the eyes of students, and students seeing teaching as the key to their ongoing learning."

Restore Water Project – High School

LYNN DANIEL, HIGH SCHOOL COORDINATOR

Hang on! Drawing down carbon and keeping water in the soil and vegetation – aren't these some key ways we can mitigate the impacts of climate change? Oh yes. This then is a project good for High School!

Our enquiry question: How can we restore the small water cycle in our school environment to keep water in the soil, draw down carbon and increase resilience to drought, flood and fire?

Students conducted a site study, mapping how water moves across the land, identifying what we are doing well (for example, rain gardens and gardens designed to capture rainfall and run off) and which areas we could improve. We then analysed soil and vegetation cover from various sites to experience the difference between healthy and eroded/poor soils. In a teaspoon of healthy soil there are more critters than there are people on the planet! That's a lot of socialising in a very small space.

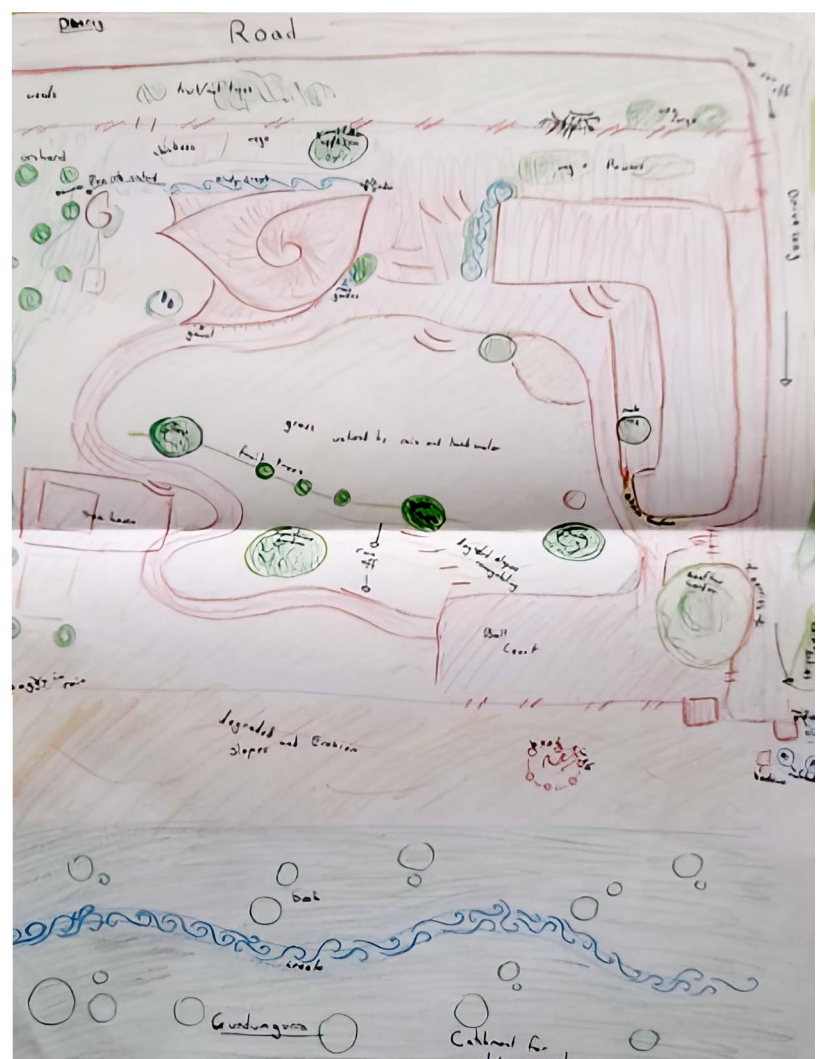
Mapping flow of water across the school. Water in the creek below our school eventually flows into the Warragamba catchment.

Next Step

Addressing the erosion on the slope directly down from the ballcourt, through tiering and possibly a rain garden, and then creating healthy soil carbon soakage and providing habitat and food for critters.

And beyond this?

An outdoor learning/bush circle that restores connection to Country and community.



Kindling a Light

We believe education is a social deed. Our purpose is to educate children and young people to be powerfully equipped in becoming individuals who contribute to creating a more compassionate and fair society for all.



**Year 7 Orientation Day:
Wednesday 25th May**

2023 Year 7 students are invited to join us for a day in our High School. Discover our facilities and meet your teachers and fellow students. For information and bookings please contact (02) 4757 4402 or community@kindlehill.nsw.edu.au



↑ Soil analysis: identifying healthy soil soak and poor soils. Can you tell which came from the rooftop vegetable garden and which from the eroded site?

Scientist Walter Jehne believes that increasing vegetation cover by 4% will offset the 1 degree excess warming. We were looking for the places we could improve the soil carbon soak by increasing biodiversity of soil and vegetation. Could we increase vegetation cover on our site by 4%?



Necessary Traditions





Acknowledgement

Kindlehill is situated on Dharug and Gundungurra land;
we pay respects to the traditional custodians whose
cultures and customs continue to nurture this land.

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Truth
telling about the impact and legacy of colonisation, a
Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian
Constitution and a process of Treaty making.



Kindlehill School

Kindlehill is a K-10 school with a philosophy in Rudolf Steiner Education

www.kindlehill.nsw.edu.au

Ph: 4757 4402 | 8 Lake Street, Wentworth Falls NSW 2782