



Equipping healthy canteens

Thirty four school canteens received a much-needed boost this term, winning Canteen Improvement Grants, the last phase of Council's successful and long-running Canteen Improvement Project.

Only a few years ago, many school canteens were in a dire situation, struggling to move to healthier menus without going out of business. With new healthy food requirements for public schools, just ordering pre-prepared frozen food is no longer an option. Canteens need to be sophisticated places, but healthier food is often more expensive and takes longer to prepare.

To help, Council successfully lobbied for \$200,000 in funding from the ACT Government in 2013 to provide canteens with systems to save time and money, and quality resources and advice.

Now, the last of that funding – over \$60,000 in total – has been distributed directly to public school canteens who applied for assistance.

The money will be used for a range of projects. Many canteens will buy new appliances so that they can more easily make more food on the premises from fresh ingredients.

Some canteens' needs were as simple as new pots and pans. Others will purchase slow cookers, additional ovens, fridges and freezers, or blenders for soups and smoothies to provide new healthy menu choices to appeal to students. Other funded

Continued on page 3



Students queue outdoors at Chapman Primary's canteen. A new awning, funded by a Canteen Improvement Grant, will ensure they can buy food, whatever the weather.

Inside this issue

From the President	p. 2
Potentially useful app	p. 4
Bridging a cultural divide	p. 5
Addressing learning difficulties	p. 6
Q&A: Google Apps in schools	p. 8
At our P&C	p.10
School sunscreen	p.11
Dates to remember	p.12
Students who care	p.12

From the President



John Haydon

Have you heard of ACSSO? No, maybe not. It is the Australian Council of State School Organisations and its job is to lobby the Federal Government in favour of public schools and to provide feedback on the views of parents and carers of public school students. It's an important job.

Our ACT Council is of course a member of ACSSO and we have a representative, Melissa Hankinson, on the Board of ACSSO.

In September I was lucky enough to attend the 2015 ACSSO conference in Brisbane, a joint exercise with P&Cs Queensland State conference, and I'd like to share with you the sometimes surprising observations of some of the guest speakers.

David Gillespie is the author of 'Sweet Poison', a best selling book that turns many readers into anti-sugar zealots. He is not a nutritionist but a lawyer! The father of six, he has now turned his attention to the issue of public versus private schools in his new book 'Free Schools'. His research leads him to believe that the following do NOT matter in schooling: mixed versus same sex, size of the school, class size, composite or multi-age classes, streaming by ability (he sees it as a negative however), teachers with post-graduate qualifications, or the length of a teacher's experience providing they have been teaching for at least three years. He used a comparison of Sweden and nearby Finland to argue that 'school choice' destroys school systems. Interestingly he also claimed that each student having a computer gave worse outcomes than two students sharing a computer as with two students sharing there was interaction between the students. He is very much in favour of public schools and says you are wasting your money paying private school fees.

Stephan Hajkowicz, a 'futurist' tasked by CSIRO with predicting global trends, presented on global megatrends. With an anticipated 12

billion people we need 'more from less', his first global megatrend. 'Planetary pushback' is another, the prime example being global warming. 'Anti-microbial resistance', when our antibiotics stop being effective, will be hugely important with the only good side being that it will cause people to worry less about global warming – I think this was a joke. But it is no laughing matter that predicted deaths from anti-microbial resistance are 400 million by 2050. Other megatrends are an 'ageing population' and 'digital immersion' whereby artificial intelligence will mean that many of the jobs kids are currently trained for will soon no longer exist.

Ishi Singh, Global Partnerships head for Google for Education, based in Singapore, presented on 'what does IT spell for the classroom'. He listed three trends: (1) Machine learning – we already have the computing technology for neural pathways and machines will soon talk to you, though there was no mention of concern many people in the field hold for the killer robots being developed by the military going rogue and destroying mankind; (2) Ubiquitous information – in 20 years computers will be small enough to be embedded in the brain so we will not need to remember things but will only need to be creative; and (3) Multi-disciplinary innovation – we need different perspectives working together with humans collaborating more with other humans and smart machines. On current schooling, Ishi said that only 25% of kids can sit down and learn and we need multi-disciplinary learning. For example, World War II was not only about history but also science, supply chains, and so on.

Robyn Henderson presented on networking, arguing that the average person will have 5-7 careers in their lifetime and that our children have of course yet to start theirs. We need to network 24/7 apparently, which sounds exhausting, and always act like the host rather than the guest. She quoted an African proverb: to go fast, go alone; to go far, go together. ●

Equipping healthy canteens

continued from front page

projects include signage and fittings to make the canteen more attractive, and laptops or software to manage finances or make the move to online ordering for parents.

Alex Frawley, P&C volunteer at the Torrens Primary School canteen is thrilled. “The grant gives us the opportunity to embrace fresh food, the tools to make a difference to the canteen, which we couldn’t afford on our own,” she says.

“Two years ago, the situation seemed almost impossible,” says former Council Vice-president Hugh Boulter. “Through our canteen improvement project we have moved canteens online, joined them up with supportive organisations and paid for menu advice and reviews of their business.”

“We now see an increase in confidence and enthusiasm. Most P&C-run canteens feel better equipped with information and resources. Equipping their kitchens with these grants is an added boost.”

In addition to the latest round of small grants, Council has provided a range of support over the past two years via the Canteen Improvement Project.

Flexischools’ and computers

Council purchased the Flexischools online ordering system for 26 school canteens with a negotiated ongoing discount for the use of the system. Ten canteens also received new computers to use with the system.

Canteens have found the system reduces the workload of canteen staff and volunteers, freeing up time for food preparation. In some cases parent preference for online ordering has led to an increase in sales, helping with financial viability.

The system also provides useful sales and financial information which has made it easier for canteens to understand their financial position and improve their business model.

Council also purchased ten Flexischools Point of

Sale systems for secondary schools. This allows families to load canteen credit on to a card which students can then use at the canteen counter. The system has been welcomed by the P&Cs running these canteens.

Menu assessments

Council also paid the cost of around 30 school canteen menu assessments conducted by Nutrition Australia. The assessments give excellent feedback to the canteens on the Red, Green or Amber status of each menu item and suggestions for making recipes more nutritious.

Good advice

Council has paid for all P&C-run canteens to be members of Healthy Kids Australia (HKA) for next three years. The closure of the ACT School Canteens Association in late 2012 left ACT canteens without expert advice.

As members of HKA, canteens now have access to management courses, business audits, industrial relations information and support, promotional materials, menu ideas and much more (check out healthy-kids.com.au).

Sharing experiences

Council now has a specialist canteen subcommittee where P&C members involved in canteens can share their ideas and expertise and hear from expert organisations.

A brighter future

Together this assistance has seen some closed school canteens re-open. Other canteens report improvements in their financial position and in several cases this has been dramatic. Canteens have also continued to embrace fresh, healthy food and ‘Green’ their menus.

“The biggest change,” says Mr Boulter, “has been an increase in confidence. Morale is up. P&Cs, staff and volunteers feel more positive about the future of their canteens where, in some cases, continuing had seemed impossible.” ●

Potentially useful app

Learning Potential is the Federal Government's new, free app to help parents be more involved in their child's learning. We take a closer look.

Researchers around the world agree that when parents are involved in their children's learning, it improves their education outcomes – from motivation, to attendance and school grades. The Learning Potential app is the core focus of the Federal Government's Parent Engagement information campaign announced in the 2015-16 budget. You may have seen the television advertisements that go with it.

What is in the app?

The Learning Potential app has reams of short articles and some videos offering tips and ideas on how to be more involved in your child's learning, helping them at home and interacting usefully with the school. The content is repeated online at learningpotential.gov.au for those without a smart device.

The content is grouped in age categories: zero to five year olds; those in primary school; and high schoolers. For example, for young children, there are simple tips to make reading fun, even without a book. If your child is in primary school, there are educational games to play when you are in the car or doing the grocery shopping. For high schoolers, there are tips on getting through homework and building their confidence at school.

You can personalise the app if you chose, by adding your child's name and age so that you get more relevant content. Articles can be marked as 'favourite' to come back to later, or shared through Facebook, Twitter and email. You can also set a reminder to help you put the tips into practice. For example, if you're going on a driving holiday, you can set a reminder to play some educational games in the car.

Is it any good?

Reviews of the app have been mixed. Some parents have found it extremely useful, others have been downright hostile.

A couple of us here at Council took a look and, to be frank, we were a little underwhelmed.

The customisation is extremely minimal. You get the same articles for a first grader and a child in year six. How a sixth grader would react to a game of 'grocery store bingo' or 'blue unicorn underpants' is probably not fit to publish!

There is also no way to search the content or browse by categories – educational games are mixed in with articles about NAPLAN and eating a good breakfast, and you get shown a different batch each time you open the app so if you haven't hit the favourite button, finding something that you passed by before but need now is near impossible.

Certainly, if parents have a particular question or issue, a quick web search will be a better option, because of the lack of a search function, and there's little here you won't find elsewhere.

However, the articles are certainly varied, wide-reaching and cover many questions of interest to parents. The tone is light and friendly, not overly 'governmental'. Many parents like getting tips and ideas on areas they hadn't necessarily considered. The app is especially well suited to newer parents, or those renewing an effort to be more involved in their kids' schooling but not sure where to start.

'Preaching to the converted'

It is likely, however, that for many parents the app will provide few new insights. Some of the content is banal. For example:

"If your child is going on a school camp, talk to



them about the activities they might participate in and help them get organised and packed for their time away. When your child returns from the camp, engage in conversation with them about the things they enjoyed most or found most challenging and/or rewarding.”

The article on *How to pick the best books for your child* suggests it is best to visit a library and let your child choose their own book. Then: *“try this quick test to see whether a book is too difficult for your child. Flick through the book and pick a random page. If you see five or more words on the page that you think your child might struggle with, they are probably not ready for that book yet.”*

That is the extent of the advice on choosing books. There are no links to authoritative lists of books to try, no reviews by parents. It is pretty simple stuff.

Clearly the success of the Federal Government’s parental engagement program depends on parents who haven’t heard this type of advice before downloading and using the app. But are TV ads enough to make parents seek it out?

The hardest things with the app is to see where the money went. The entire Federal project ‘to raise awareness of the positive benefits of parent engagement in education’ will cost \$5 million. Just what else we will get for this money – apart from the app and the ads – is yet to be seen. ●

Bridging a cultural divide

Companion House helps schools to reach out to migrant families.

Language barriers and a different cultural perspective often make it difficult for migrant and refugee families to become involved in schools and for children to flourish. Likewise, schools can find it difficult to reach beyond these barriers and communicate well with parents.

Companion House, a community organisation founded to care for survivors of torture and trauma, provides a range of services to help.

Cultural awareness training for school staff can help break down the barriers of a lack of shared cultural heritage. In some cultures for example schools, and principals in particular, are held in such high esteem that parents will not approach the school if there are problems or to ask questions. Simply understanding this can help staff reach out to these families.

Companion House run cultural awareness courses which can be presented in staff meetings or as a staff development session. Their factsheet

called ‘*Tips for Teachers*’ has practical tips on supporting migrant students and building relationships with parents and the community.

Companion House can also assist schools by providing counselling services for students who have been traumatised by their migrant or refugee journey.

“One of the most important things for migrant families is understanding. Schools and teachers simply realising their difficulties and their point of view goes such a long way,” says Glenn Flanagan from Companion House.

“Then schools generally realise how important it is to use translating or interpreter services when communicating with parents,” he says.

Council and Companion House are working together to run an event for principals early next year, to help them feel more confident reaching out to migrant families.

Find resources at www.companionhouse.org.au and more about translating and interpreter services at www.tisnational.gov.au. ●

Addressing learning difficulties

Around one in ten students has a specific difficulty with their learning which needs special attention by teachers. Making sure teachers and parents have the tools they need to help is a significant challenge, but real progress is being made.

In 2012 the Education Directorate established a special taskforce to look at ways to better support public school students with learning difficulties. Council was lucky enough to be given a seat at the table and, as a member of the taskforce, was able to provide the parent perspective on this issue.

“The most pleasing thing about being involved in the taskforce is watching the recommendations being implemented. There has been real commitment in the Directorate and a lot of hard work to follow through and turn our suggestions into real improvements in schools,” said Viv Pearce, Council’s representative on the committee.

The Taskforce on Students with Learning Difficulties considered students experiencing language disorders, comprehension and processing disorders, dyslexia-related issues and significant difficulties in general numeracy and literacy. It looked at current practices and asked schools, staff, students and parents what could be improved. From their considerations the taskforce recommended three things – building the skills of staff in addressing learning difficulties, partnering with families, and developing a consistent, systemic approach across schools and the Directorate.

The biggest area of activity since has been in providing more support, training, resources and skills for teachers and support staff.

Each school now has a designated learning difficulties representative teacher who is the first point of contact for parents and serves as the school’s expert. The school representatives, plus school psychologists, support staff and Literacy and Numeracy Field Officers (over 1100 staff in all) received specific training, targeted to gaps

identified by schools and teachers themselves, such as how to identify students with problems, evidence-based interventions and current research on teaching for learning difficulties.

A suite of resources has been amassed on the Directorate’s secure ‘Digital Backpack’ website for the representative teachers to share with their school colleagues, including screening tests for identifying students who may need additional support and videos of these being administered, plus videos of the training the representatives received. The site also allows teachers to share their experiences, and learn and collaborate across schools.

Teachers have reported being more confident in helping students with learning difficulties after receiving the training and having the toolkit available to them. They have also been able to pass their learning on to other teachers at their school, using the online content.

Parents’ knowledge has increased, too, as a result of Directorate-led workshops attended by nearly 150 people.

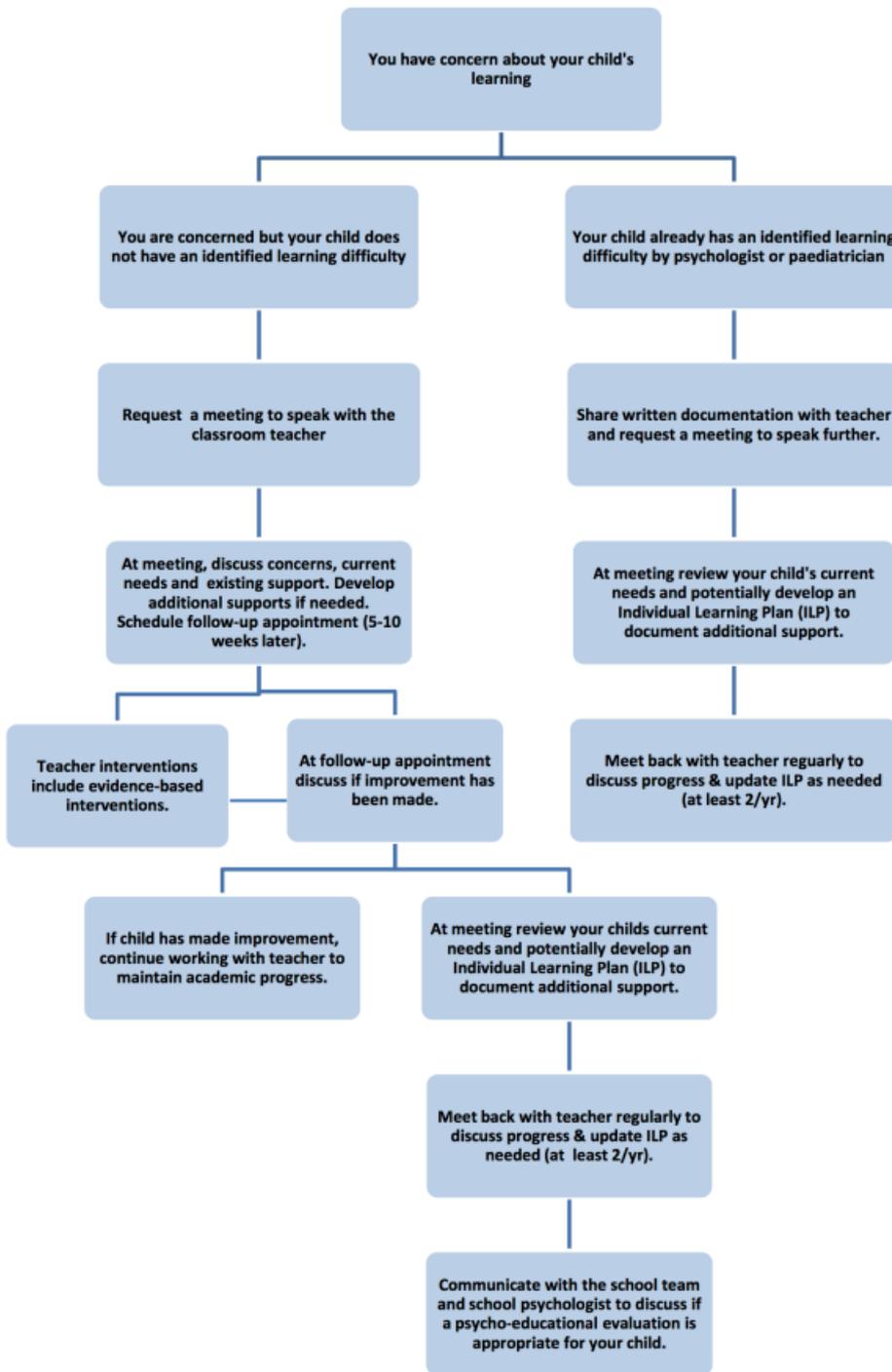
The workshops for parents were run by an expert in the field who told parents more about learning difficulties, what can be done, and how to support their child both at home and through effective communication with schools.

The workshops were very much appreciated by parents and carers.

“Thank you so much, I am really grateful you have taken the time to help, as I have been trying to find someone like you for years,” said one parent.

“I thought the workshop was great and the time we had with the experts after the workshop was exceptionally valuable,” commented another.

In response to parent requests, the Directorate has also written a range of factsheets on particular learning difficulties, diagnosing problems and using technology to assist students.



Flowchart showing communication pathway for parents and carers of students with learning difficulties. Courtesy of ACT Education and Training Directorate.

evidence-based instruction they need to bridge the gaps. If, after six months of this specific intervention, the student does not respond, additional investigations are made and further help provided.

“This is such a fundamentally important part of what schools do – making sure no one is left behind,” said Ms Pearce. “Helping kids with difficulties early stops the problem compounding – losing self-esteem or acting-up in class.”

“Parents have obviously appreciated the Directorate’s focus on this, and they have appreciated having an expert project manager there to contact for advice. But the funding for this project ends this year, and here at Council we are concerned that this jeopardises the excellent work done to date.”

“Council will be monitoring closely what happens next,” she said. “We need to ensure that students with learning difficulties are systematically identified and helped early in their school career, and that parents continue to be provided with quality information as they have been with this project.” ●

The final recommendation of the taskforce – building a consistent systemic approach – is an area of ongoing work.

Last year, one approach was trialled in two primary schools. It involved a whole-school approach for identifying students in Kindergarten to Year Two who aren’t responding to the core classroom program and determining what

Parents concerned about their child’s progress should discuss it with the classroom teacher and the school’s Learning Difficulties Representative Teacher. Find Directorate factsheets at www.det.act.gov.au by searching for ‘learning difficulties factsheets’.

A great booklet ‘Understanding learning difficulties: a practical guide for parents’ is available from speldnsw.org.au/news/understanding-learning-difficulties-2015-ed/

Google Apps in schools: your questions answered

At Council's September meeting, parents had questions on the use of IT in schools, Dan Bray from the Education and Training Directorate (ETD) responds.

Why use technology in learning?

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are an important part of teaching and learning. Canberra schools emphasise the use of ICT and the development of ICT skills to ensure that their students are prepared for a changed and changing world. This approach is informed by the Australian Curriculum where ICT is a general capability, meaning it is embedded across learning areas such as languages and science.

A recent report released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasised that ICT alone does not have a significant impact on the classroom. However, when paired with effective teaching and modern educational contexts, the report noted that ICT can provide learning opportunities that *“enhance experiential learning, foster project-based and inquiry-based pedagogies, facilitate hands-on activities and cooperative learning, deliver formative real-time assessment and support learning and teaching communities.”*

The consensus of governments and policy makers both nationally and internationally is that students must learn how to interact with ICT tools in order to enhance their personal capabilities and become productive citizens. This means developing a basic understanding of how computers and technologies work, but also developing skills in finding, selecting and critically analysing information. Evidence is emerging that indicates that students who are not exposed to high-quality teaching and learning about and with ICT are likely to be at a disadvantage, both socially and professionally.

To ensure that our teachers can offer the best learning experiences when using Google Apps for Education, we provide a range of support and training opportunities. Each term, we offer training

workshops for both beginning and intermediate-level users. Teachers develop a range of effective strategies for using technology in their classroom. We also facilitate communities of practice for all staff, with an online community devoted to developing networks and support.

ICT will not replace every activity that takes place in a school. ETD firmly believes in the purposeful use of ICT and that many excellent teaching practices take place without it. We do not advocate a ‘switched on all day’ approach. We believe firmly that good teaching is the core of quality learning, so we provide technology that is simple, powerful and reliable, so we can focus on what’s important: quality learning

for every student, every day.

What process led to the adoption of Google Apps for Education (GAFE)?

Since 2004, Canberra public schools have used a variety of different online learning platforms, each having their own set of features. To ensure we were providing the best tools and capabilities available, in 2013 we consulted with the Schools Learning Technology Advisory Group (SLTAG), the Student Congress, Principals and school ICT Coordinators. From this, we identified three key things expected by students in the classroom:

- access to real-world learning platforms that are familiar and easy to use
- connection to reliable high-speed internet
- use of personal electronic devices to support learning.

When investigating GAFE, we ran a trial across eight schools using Google and other similar web-based education products. By using real learning examples and scenarios, we wanted the schools to identify the platform of choice to be released for all ACT public schools. The conclusion of the six month trial was a resounding “yes” to GAFE.

Why Google Apps for Education?

When we think of Google, we might think of their Search, Maps and other tools. The tools Google

“Students unable to navigate through a complex digital landscape will no longer be able to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life around them.”

– OECD (2015): *Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection*

provides for education are world-leading, and enable students to access and participate in their learning from anywhere. The major advantage repeated by staff and students was that the GAFE platform was powerful and easy to use, resulting in less time spent on understanding the technology and more time for teaching and learning.

We asked the students in the trial for feedback on what Google enabled them to do. They said:

- we are better able to track our work and we are more organised
- with all work in one place (Google Drive) and Google continuously saving, nothing can be lost
- teachers and parents can provide timely feedback on work
- teachers can see progress at any time
- if absent, work can still be accessed by teachers.

Students and teachers can also access these tools from any internet device, whether it be a desktop computer, iPad or smart phone.

What about data storage and privacy?

Our Google Apps platform is hosted by Google on a separate ACT public schools domain called 'Schoolsnet.act.edu.au'. This domain is only accessible by our known teacher and student users.

Any content a student uploads or creates within this environment is set to private by default. A student can then choose to share content more broadly. By giving students access to online collaboration tools in guided classroom activities, teachers have the opportunity to help them develop safe behaviours consistent with the online experience at home.

Who owns the student data in Google and how long is it there for?

Students are the owners of their data and any content they create or add to Google. Our students can keep the same Google account when enrolled in the ACT public school system and beyond. This means they can choose to take their own personal learning portfolio with them after they graduate. When a student leaves the system, their school account is closed and all data that resides in this account is permanently deleted by Google within a maximum period of 180 days. Students can choose to delete items themselves at any time.

If Google is in the “cloud”, does this mean it’s not secure?

One of the biggest myths in ICT at the moment is

that anything in the cloud is not secure or reliable. In many cases, the opposite is true. Google provide the GAFE service to our students under very strict data and security conditions. For example, unlike consumer “@gmail.com” accounts which we may have at home, our students’ education accounts are never used in any way for advertising purposes. Due to the need to maintain the availability of their services, Google’s commitment to data security is world-leading and consistent with our own approach to security.

To support the implementation and adoption of cloud services and to adhere to the Information Privacy Act 2014, ETD commissioned an independent Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA). The assessment was conducted by an independent organisation led by a former Commonwealth Privacy commissioner, and is now published and available on the ETD website. Overall, GAFE was assessed as low risk for use in our schools. We have also implemented recommendations from this assessment including an additional policy step to ensure parents provide informed consent prior to the service being enabled for their child.

How do I benefit as a parent?

Some schools have taken the opportunity to harness the easy-share nature of Google documents to share students’ work and progress with their parents. This can include documents, files, calendars for assessments, tasks and events.

We encourage you to speak with your child’s school to find out how they are using GAFE and how your child and family can get the most out of it.

Where can parents get more information?

Firstly, you should contact your child’s school to discuss any questions you may have. You can also find information on the following sites:

- learnanywhere.org (ETD’s parent information site for the new ICT services)
- the ‘*Learn anywhere: ICT for students*’ section of the DET website, under ‘*Teaching and learning*’ at www.det.act.gov.au
- video of the OECD’s Andreas Schleicher discussing the impact of technology in education at bit.ly/videoOECD
- information on GAFE privacy and security www.google.com/edu/trust/
- a version of this article with full references at www.actparents.org.au. •

At our P&C...

A recently completed 'Community Kitchen' at Hughes Primary School opens up the school to international families in a new way.

Hughes Primary School has a large and diverse international community: more than 50 different languages are spoken by school families and more than half of the school's students speak English as a second language. According to Principal Kate Smith, the lack of a shared language was holding back some families from becoming involved with the school.

So P&C member Joanna Murphy came up with an informal, non-intimidating way for parents to become involved: through food. The result is a new community kitchen for the school which opened in September.

"The kitchen creates a level playing field for international communities. The idea is to help families feel that they belong here, feel supported," Joanna said.

On the day of the kitchen's official launch it was buzzing with families cooking together. Students, parents and younger siblings worked together to read recipes and create biscuits for a whole-school afternoon tea to celebrate the new facility.

"We have had at least 65 families through today," said Joanna as the plates of biscuits mounted up.

Cooking is, indeed, a great leveller. Regardless of background, everyone has their own expertise to – quite literally – bring to the table.



Above and left: parents and students reading recipes, measuring and cooking together in the new kitchen.

The school also hosts English conversation classes for parents – run through a partnership with Woden Community Services. Parents attending the classes have already been sharing their love of food, using the kitchen to prepare a feast for teachers while practicing their English.

"Funding for the kitchen came mostly from a Building Multicultural Communities grant from the previous Federal Government," explained Joanna (as we walked to the local shops to buy more eggs). "The P&C contributed by buying the sink and oven, and the school paid for new flooring and paint, so it really is a joint venture."

Teachers intend to use the kitchen for lessons incorporating food preparation with literacy and numeracy as students follow recipes and measure ingredients. Work is also underway to get the dis-used school garden producing fresh food again to tie in with the project and innovative ways of teaching the curriculum.

Future plans also include demonstrations of international cooking by parents for parents. The kitchen will also come in handy for P&C-run events and special lunches. ●

School sunscreen

When it comes to simple sun protection behaviours in ACT primary schools, writes David Wild from the ACT Cancer Council, there is one behaviour which tends to fall short, but shouldn't: sunscreen.

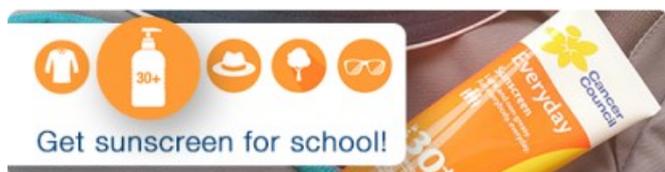
Are ACT schools legally required to make sunscreen available in all classrooms? The short answer to this question is no, not really, but they should because it is the right thing to do in a country like Australia!

Every ACT school has a legal responsibility and duty of care to protect its students (and workers) as much as *reasonably practicable* from any foreseeable harm. Over-exposure to solar UV radiation is a foreseeable harm because we know it causes skin and eye damage and contributes to skin cancer, including deadly melanoma.

The Education Directorate also requests that ACT schools make *'sunscreen available for situations where students have not provided it, where they have forgotten it and at outdoor events'*. I wonder just how many primary school students actually take sunscreen to school with them each day between August and May. Regardless, it just makes good sense for schools to make sunscreen accessible so students have a choice to apply it.

It is in every ACT school's best interest to make sunscreen not only available, but more importantly, easily accessible to all students (and workers) throughout the day, that is, in all classrooms or via designated sunscreen application spots throughout the school. Off course teachers need to be proactive by reminding and creating opportunities for students to apply it. This is especially important before lunchtime between August and May when daily UV levels peak and, with it, the risk of skin damage.

For more information about sun protection in schools and early childhood services contact Cancer Council ACT on 6257 9999. •



About us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations is the representative body for Parent & Citizen Associations in the ACT.

We represent over 60,000 parents and carers in 86 ACT public schools.

About our magazine

ParentACTion is a free journal published four times a year. Distribution: Online plus hardcopy (600 copies to the ACT Legislative Assembly, ACT Government School Boards and P&Cs, public education organisations and interstate parent associations).

Contributions, advertising and feedback are always being sought. Contributions can be emailed directly to the Editor, Janelle Kennard, at jkennard@actparents.org.au.

Views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations.

Our Executive

President:	John Haydon
Vice President:	Amanda Bichard
Secretary:	Cecilia Shlegel
Assist. Secretary:	Matthew Williams
Treasurer:	Matthew Williams
Imm. Past President:	Vivienne Pearce
Committee:	Andrew Bidwell, Sharon Ding, Michael Rush, Melissa Hankinson, Kimberley Fischer.

Life members

Ian Morgan, Pam Cahir, Graeme Evans, Joan Kellett, Richard Scherer, Trevor Cobbold, Grant Battersby.

Contact us

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations Inc.

a	Maitland House 100 Maitland Street Hackett ACT 2602
t	(02) 6241 5759
f	(02) 6241 8839
e	contact@actparents.org.au
w	www.actparents.org.au

Office staff

Executive Officer:	Terry Sanders
Policy Officer:	Maclaren Wall
Communications Officer:	Janelle Kennard
Executive Assistant:	Rachel McGrath

Office hours: 9.30am - 2.30pm Monday to Friday.
Closed public holidays and school holidays.

Dates to remember

Oct 30 **Teacher appreciation Day**

Nov 24 **Council Annual General Meeting**
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Dec 19 **Council office closed for**
- Jan 24 **school break**

Feb 23 **Council General Meeting**
7.00pm - 9.30pm
Centre for Teaching and Learning
51 Fremantle Drive, Stirling

Students who care

Last month, 29 ACT primary school students were recognised for their compassion with a Fred Hollows Humanity Award.

The awards celebrate the wonderful and caring contributions our primary school students make to their school or community. The actions of this year's recipients were diverse and inspiring. Femke Sissingh Meijer, from Giralang Primary School, was named the ACT Junior Ambassador, receiving a special medal.

Femke was nominated for the care and assistance she shows her peers. Despite moving to Australia with her family only a year ago, Femke has shown that language is no barrier to compassion. She has particularly cared for new students who themselves have just arrived from overseas.

As Junior Ambassador, Femke will allocate \$2500 to a Fred Hollows Foundation program of her choice to help end avoidable blindness. This will be done during an exciting visit to Sydney to meet the Fred Hollows Foundation Team.

Four other students also received a special mention in the awards. Erin Donnelly, from Kingsford Smith School, made Easter baskets for all the babies in the Canberra Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Rebekah Williams from Gold Creek School supported the 'World's Greatest Shave', running several fundraising events and shaving her hair off in front of the entire junior school, eventually raising over \$3500.

Emma Dowdy-Pitt, from Cranleigh School, received special mention for her kindness and leadership. Emma and her mother also produced



Femke Sissingh Meijer receiving her award and medal from Ms Gabi Hollows and the ACT Chief Minister.

a video which highlights inclusion and equality for people living with a disability.

Elia Georgievski of Giralang Primary was mentioned for the way he helps all students to participate in events, by running beside them, pushing their wheel chair or being the voice of encouragement.

Ms Gabi Hollows, the Fred Hollows Foundation Founding Director was impressed by the response from students. "It's wonderful to see so many young people making a positive difference in their communities," she said.

"The ideas and endless energy that young people have continue to inspire me. Fred would have been incredibly proud that the Foundation has inspired students to dream big and help others."

The Fred Hollows Foundation, with the support of the Education and Training Directorate, runs the awards to inspire students to continue the legacy of the late Fred Hollows (1929-93). •