Watervale Primary School

Children change the canteen menu
‘Old and Healthy’

An eat well be active - Primary Schools project school

Our thanks go to ACHPER for this article from ewba Newsletter Feb 2012

Watervale Primary School celebrated its 150th birthday last year – and is still sprightly, fit and healthy! It was fascinating to pore over past records prior to celebrations, and to recognise the immense changes that have taken place. One of the treasures uncovered was a lunch order list for the local shop. Being situated in the main street alongside the general store, it makes sense for lunches to be provided by the shop. The old lunch list proudly boasts huge variety – six types of pie, four types of sausage roll, four types of hot dog, seven choices of hot chips, and five in the cake range. There are only three entries under ‘sandwiches’ and one under ‘fruit’.

While often we think change is slow and subtle, it is only when we look back that we begin to see how embedded the changes have become. Whole school research and exploration is achievable and effective in a smaller school, and with commitment to weekly sessions around the topic of healthy foods, our students developed a strong voice around creating change in their school food choices. The lunch foods available from the local shop now comfortably meet the tastes of the children and offer a variety of healthy and appealing choices that also happen to meet the requirements of the Right Bite policy.

We are fortunate to have a strong culture of parent involvement, and with two Community Foodies in our current parent body, the children have been guided through the expansion and development of an existing garden bed, plus the establishment of four raised beds, seed raising and compost. The students witnessed the building of beds using perforated pipes under gravel, facilitating consistent watering to the soil. Further upright pipes have been added to house some of our school worms (grown in junior science), allowing them to work their magic through each bed.

Exemplary student behaviour leads to the reward of whole school Fun Days. It is a significant reflection of the value of our food and garden work that students have often chosen to run Fun Days around food preparation. The next Fun Day is currently being planned. The children have collected a heap of sticks for a campfire. Our generous Community Foodies will help us make damper incorporating the green leafy vegies from the
garden, along with a delicious pasta stir fry. We want our school community to cherish a long and healthy future, well beyond its 150 years.

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eat well be active - Primary Schools Project, a joint SA Health and Department for Education and Child Development project from 2008-2013.