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## Meet our youngest students

Guess the age of the youngest TCS student. You'd be right if you said three years old, and it's not one child genius, either. TCS provides an early childhood education programme, with up to 840 preschool students on the roll at any one time.

Early Childhood Manager Jenny Hayes says most of the youngest students at TCS are enrolled because they live at a distance from an early childhood centre.

'There's also an increasing number of children on our roll who can't attend a face-to-face centre for health reasons, or because they have a sibling with health issues,' she said.

To ensure the young students get some experience of mixing with others, the enrolment criteria allow them to attend up to two half days a week at a face-to-face early childhood centre while they're enrolled at TCS. This gives them the best of both worlds: a personalised programme and the chance to play with others and learn about being in a group.

The hands-on involvement of a parent or other supervisor is essential when learning at a distance and their partnership with teachers is the foundation of the service. Teachers spend a lot of time nurturing that relationship.

'Sometimes parents aren't sure how they'll get on, especially if they've had their own negative experiences at school,' says Jenny. 'But one of the aims of the early childhood programme is to empower parents as teachers, and often the parents are pleasantly surprised.'

*Continued next page*



*Some of TCS's youngest students, Loki (left) and Tam, learned about conservation when they potted seedling trees and visited a recycling centre at a day event in Marlborough in June.*

## Launching a career with Gateway



*Nathan Hendry at work.*

Nathan Hendry's Gateway experience has introduced him to an industry he can imagine being his life's work. Mad about boats since he joined sea scouts aged 13, he'd heard about Gateway from a mate, and asked TCS Gateway coordinator Kathryn Smith about doing some work with a boat building company.

Through the Boating Industry Training Organisation (BITO), Kathryn negotiated a placement for 17-year-old Nathan at Formula Cruisers, based in Waitakere, where he's helping to build luxury power boats over 60 feet long. What skills are involved in producing this kind of vessel? It's a long list. There's woodworking and fibreglassing, engineering, cabinetry, electrical work, plumbing, painting and even upholstery; everything that goes into the finished product.

*Continued on page 7*

# Need something to read?



Library assistant Ingrid Goteib with some of the newest books. Photo Knorriey McFarlane.

Some of the newest books to arrive at TCS library are about skateboarding, fashion and global warming. There are also DVDs, including David Attenborough's *The Living Planet* series, magazines and fiction for all ages. New books arrive throughout the year.

TCS Library has more than 25,000 titles, ranging from picture books for preschoolers to NCEA revision guides and books on child development and learning. Librarian Christine Moir says she and her staff are happy to recommend books for those who aren't quite sure what they'd like to read next.

All full-time, non-fee-paying students living in New Zealand and their parents and supervisors can borrow books from TCS Library at no charge. Contact the library at 0800 65 99 88 or by email [library@correspondence.school.nz](mailto:library@correspondence.school.nz). If you happen to be in Wellington, you can come in and choose your own books on weekdays between 8.30am and 4.30pm. You can search the library catalogue online through the School's website.

## Spotted a boo boo?

If you find an error in any TCS learning material, please give your subject or class teacher the details, including the name of the resource, the page number and a description of the error. Your teacher will pass this information on, so that the errors can be corrected.

## Need help with your school work? Call your teacher directly

All teachers will be working in regional teams in term four, so primary, special education and former secondary subject helplines are no longer in use. If you need help or have a question about your school work, contact your subject teacher or learning advisor directly by email or toll free on 0800 65 99 88.

If you're using the 0800 number but don't know your teacher's extension number, just press 0 and ask the receptionist to put you through to your teacher or another teacher in that subject. Please have your student ID number handy when you ring or include it on any email you send.

### Meet our youngest students *continued from page 1*

'They'll report: "I never realised I could do this"; Jenny said. It's all about doing things with the child, making it fun, and mixing in some learning along the way.'

Teachers post out a mix of printed material, audio CDs, DVDs, CD-ROMs, books, puzzles and games. Many of these have been developed during the last three years by teachers working with TCS's Media Services unit.

Parents have access to a wealth of information about child development and learning in TCS's library. They are encouraged to discuss their child's learning needs with the teacher so that together they can develop a programme that suits both parent and child.

'Parents living in isolated places really appreciate that opportunity to talk about their children, because often there aren't other parents with young children nearby to compare notes with. They don't have the same opportunities to see how other children that age behave, so it's reassuring to talk to teachers who know what to expect at different stages of development.'

A number of situations can make distance education the best option for preschoolers. The obvious one is when children live too far away from an early childhood centre (more than six kilometres) or when there is no prospect of a place becoming available at an early childhood centre within that distance. Children in families that shift frequently are also eligible, as are children with a long-term illness or medical condition or special needs that cannot be supported by a local early childhood centre.

The early childhood service has developed a new website aimed at parents and supervisors of preschool children, which includes information for parents, ideas for activities and links to music and stories. You can visit it at [www.correspondence.school.nz/ech](http://www.correspondence.school.nz/ech). The same information is available on CD.

# A notable achievement

Year 13 student Wesley Webb enjoys different types of music, but recently he's spent a lot of time listening to orchestral pieces, to hear how all the instruments sound when they're working together. He was paying especially close attention in early September when he heard the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra perform his own work, created for the Secondary Composers' Competition. Wesley was one of eight finalists whose works were performed and recorded by the orchestra before a winner was chosen. While not the ultimate winner, Wesley's work was highly commended.

This is the third time he has entered the competition, and also the third time he's made the finals, but it's still an exciting experience. Listening to his own piece being performed is nerve racking.

'It never sounds quite how I imagine it will, and so I'm holding my breath through the whole performance,' said Wesley. 'It's exhilarating if it goes well.'

Composing music for an orchestra is quite a challenge, and entrants are encouraged to attend two workshops with the orchestra's composer-in-residence Gareth Farr in the months before the deadline for submissions to help them prepare.

The theme for the 2008 competition was Pacifika, and Wesley's piece tells a story in music about the last moa. He described the style as cinematic, the kind of music you might hear on a movie soundtrack. The mood of the first movement is peaceful and serene, evoking an image of the primeval New Zealand forest, but it's not the sanctuary it seems. The second part is livelier. It introduces the moa, who is a bit awkward, even comical in its movements. The sound of a conch shell announces that hunters have caught sight of the moa, and as they start to chase it, the tempo and volume of the music builds in intensity, with a drumbeat sounding the increasing heart rate of the giant bird. Finally, the hunters catch the moa and club it to death. The last movement is slow and sad, mourning the passing of the moa.

As well as his college subjects, Wesley is studying grade eight piano, but he thinks his strength is probably in composing rather than performing. He has plenty of interests besides music, mostly in other creative areas: 'messing around in Photoshop', movie editing and visual design. In June, he won the editor's choice weekly theme award for an essay he submitted to the College Herald bemoaning the lack of melody in modern orchestral music. The essay was printed on the front page of the supplement, illustrated by Wesley's own artwork.



Annastasia with her postcard. Photo North Harbour News.

## Annastasia and the frog

A Correspondence School student's drawing is helping to protect endangered species of New Zealand frogs. Year 13 student Annastasia Minnee drew an Archey's frog for a competition sponsored by Cadbury, makers of Freddo Frog chocolates. As it is the year of the frog (and a leap year) the chocolate company decided it was a great time to support frog conservation work.

Annastasia's drawing was one of eight by different artists that were chosen to feature on postcards now being sold at zoos and Department of Conservation centres around New Zealand.

Her family has two pet frogs of a more common type, so she's got quite an interest in the amphibians. You could say she jumped at the chance to enter, and she's chuffed with the result.

Annastasia studies visual arts at TCS and she especially enjoys painting, using both acrylics and oils. This year she sold one of her paintings, a picture of a tiger, at an exhibition.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to a student from Paraparaumu and a supervisor from Masterton whose names were drawn from those returning the TCS Engagement Survey. Supervisor Shelley won the draw for \$150 in petrol vouchers, while student Tori won an MP3 player.

Thanks to all students and supervisors who returned the engagement survey. About 1600 surveys were sent to students in Years 7–13 and their supervisors all over New Zealand. The feedback we received is being collated and analysed to help us improve our service to you.

# A new way of working



Something new and exciting is happening at New Zealand's largest school, as TCS is changing the way teachers work together as well as the way they work with students, their families, whanau and communities.

Teachers in two of the new regional teaching teams are now sitting and working together. At the start of term 4, almost all teachers will be working this way. Previously, teachers of students in Years 9–13 sat in departments according to the subject they were teaching. Special Education and Primary teachers sat in their teams in a different part of the building. Now teachers from different subject areas are sitting and working in regional teams, where they can talk together about the engagement and achievement of the students they are involved with.

Curriculum leaders are working with senior teachers and teachers across the School to update resources and design new ones.

In July, representatives from TCS Parents' and Supervisors' Association (one from each of the four regions) met with Regional Managers and Deputy Chief Executive, Learning Delivery Bryce Pedersen to talk about how we can work together to plan regional camps and events. The group included Sue Cameron (Central South), Neroli Davidson (Southern), Kevin Slade (Northern) and Rachel Clunie (Central North). Feedback from the meeting will be used to develop a School-wide framework for camps and events to help ensure they meet the needs of our students and their parents/supervisors. Camps and events will be managed regionally, with the new Kaiarahi and other in-region staff playing a key role in organising and hosting them.

Staff in the Central South teaching team are planning the first Wellington-based regional event involving students, parents/supervisors and other school stakeholders.



Liaison teachers from all over New Zealand gathered in Wellington for training in term 3. Standing, from left: Warren Beard, Walter Hall, Team Administrator Myzpah Paikea, Bruce Hinton, Angela Vaughan, Graham Oliver, Ray Edwards, Marlene Ransfield, Elizabeth Newman, Jill Clark, Nick Bates, Kay Henderson and Sue Spiers. Seated, from left: Pam Osborne, Catherine Wylie, National Liaison Manager Alan Clark, Stephen Browne and Monika Kern. Absent were Murray Allison, Julie Gorman, Margaret Sullivan and Cecilia Young. Photo Knorriey McFarlane.

## Green bags are getting greener

Noticed any difference in your green bags? In August, supplies of a new model of the traditional green TCS posting bag started to be phased in at the Student Resource Centre, the warehouse that distributes work to students. The new bags are much 'greener' than the previous batch, says Media and Distribution Services Manager Chris Lawrence.

'They're made of a biodegradable material. It looks a lot like plastic, but it's actually cornstarch. So when these bags start to wear out and are taken out of circulation, they'll break down in



the landfill.' It's no small difference, because with about 13,000 students at any one time, TCS needs about 280,000 new bags each year to post work to students.

The new bags have been made marginally smaller than the old plastic ones to get them within New Zealand Post's new size limits for posted items, which came with an increase in charges for bulk posting. A new bag can still hold a two centimetre thick pile of A4 paper, and a weight of up to two kilograms, so it's big enough to do the job in nearly all situations. For now, old-style plastic bags will continue to be used for posting larger items, but eventually a larger size of biodegradable bag will also be introduced.

# Gold medal winner at TCS

TCS full-time student Anne Westerkov has won a gold medal in the open class of the Bay of Plenty Secondary Schools' Gymnastics Competition. Competing on the trampoline, Anne has also won several awards in recent years from her gymnastics club as well as full colours in gymnastics at the 2007 end-of-year prize giving at her previous school.

Anne started doing the Kiwi gym programme and later began to do trampoline classes. In the last three years she has also been involved in helping to coach other classes.

Vivienne, Anne's mum, said she was encouraged by her coaches to enter the Bay of Plenty Secondary Schools' Gymnastics Competition when she began secondary school.

'This has been a highlight of her year – one of many – and she has worked hard to improve and to do her best at this event. It was great to hear other competitors at warm up time recognising how good she was and spontaneously applauding.'

Anne continues to enjoy trampoline classes, as well as helping to coach a preschool class and assisting the staff at the club with preparation for children's birthday parties at the weekends. Fitting this in to her already busy week is a challenge but a high priority in Anne's life.

Special Education teacher Gill Percy, who is a member of the Central North region team, was excited to hear of Anne's success in her local Secondary Schools' Gymnastic competition.



*Gold medalist Anne Westerkov (front left) is congratulated by her mum Vivienne Westerkov (front right), teacher Sue Ferguson (back left) and teacher aide Alison Overend. Photo courtesy of Kim Westerkov.*

'Anne is working very well on her English, maths and art subjects and also covering a wide range of life skills topics at home, in her community and in her transition activities.'

Congratulations to Anne – a great achievement.

## Partnership helping kids stay connected with learning

TCS is working with a number of schools in the Manawatu area and the Ministry of Education on a pilot project to support students who are at risk of alienation from school to remain connected with learning and their school community.

Project Coordinator Sue Spiers says students who stay connected to school are more likely to achieve academically and have positive life outcomes.

'The project aims to identify students who are at risk of becoming alienated or excluded from school and puts in place a supportive, flexible and personalised learning programme that helps them get back on their feet and stay connected to school.'

Sixteen primary, intermediate and secondary schools are involved in the Manawatu Project. They are responsible for identifying students at risk of disconnecting from school and inviting them to take part. Students who agree to participate in the Project each have an individual learning and wellbeing plan. They are enrolled with TCS as dual students and their learning programmes are tailored to include courses with their regular school and with TCS. They receive the same level of support from TCS as if they were enrolled with us full time. The ultimate goals of the Project

focus on students reintegrating fully to school or transitioning successfully beyond school.

Since getting underway earlier this year, 90 students from Years 2–13 have been referred to the Project.

TCS Chief Executive Mike Hollings said the Manawatu Project is an example of the partnership approach he wants to see replicated around the country.

'We are in a position to work with other schools and education providers to support students who might otherwise not succeed in their learning. We can't do it alone, but we are very keen to develop partnerships at the local level to help students achieve.'

Mike said TCS is already working with a number of communities to support students' learning. 'We know that by working with students, their whanau and communities, we can help keep students engaged in learning. Our new regional approach will really help us to build on the initiatives we're already involved with and make a real difference for students who are struggling to achieve in mainstream schools.'

# Travelling through our solar system



By Shaye Burns, Year 10

*I am sitting in my chair ready for take off. I can hear in my head phones "T minus 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4." The rocket is really starting to shake and rumble now . . . "3, 2, 1, we have ignition, we have lift off. Enterprise you are clear of the tower, have a good flight."*

*I am thrust back into my chair as we take off into the atmosphere on our way to visit Jupiter and its moons. We only have another 588,000,000 km's to go!*

*For most of the trip I spent it talking to my friend Katey, but when I get a free minute I go and sit quietly by myself and stare out the window, the sight is so beautiful, so calm, so peaceful.*

*Many days later . . .*

*"Look, I can see Jupiter, Katey." It is the largest planet in the solar system, and even though back on Earth it is almost half a billion km's from us, it is very prominent in the sky. Its diameter is about 87,000, some eleven times as great as the Earth's, and just about one tenth the diameter of the sun. "Look and tell me what you see."*

*"It is a large, bright disk, like a full moon. And there are several bright stars beside it," said Katey.*

*"Those are some of Jupiter's moons. Four of them are bright enough to be seen with a small telescope from Earth. Jupiter has a big family of much smaller moons. The thirteenth was discovered in 1976. But the four that you see have been known ever since Galileo first turned his telescope on Jupiter. They are all sizable bodies; one is even larger than Mercury," said Shaye.*

*"I notice that they are in a nearly straight line. One is on the left side and three are on the right," said Katey.*

*"If you look again tomorrow night, you will see them all in different positions. They are located at different distances from Jupiter, and, therefore, circle the planet at different speeds. Because we see the orbits on edge, they always stay pretty much in a line. You said on Earth it looks like the full moon, but do you notice any difference now?" I ask.*

*"Yes, it doesn't look blotchy like the moon. But I can see some fine lines running across it, or should I say bands of darker colour, in line with the moons. What causes these?"*

*"They are probably bands of clouds, driven around Jupiter by prevailing winds, like the trade winds we have on Earth. Jupiter's atmosphere is evidently very thick and dense. Astronomers have identified methane and ammonia gases, as well as hydrogen, in it. The clouds*

*may be crystals of solid ammonia. Since the average density of Jupiter is only one fourth that of the Earth, the bulk of the planet must consist of gases . . . Do you notice anything else about this planet, Katey?"*

*"Do you mean a spot? Down in the lower hemisphere?"*

*"Yes. That is the famous 'Great Red Spot' of Jupiter."*

*"What is that spot – smoke or something?" asks Katey.*

*"There have been a lot of theories, including one that supposes that there is a volcano under the clouds. But that is not likely, since, at times, the spot shifts considerably, east and west. It does not seem to be anchored to anything solid underneath. Probably the 'Great Red Spot' is a giant storm in Jupiter's atmosphere. It was first noticed nearly a hundred years ago. It changes quite a bit in size, shape and color, but it stays there. If the spot really is a storm, it is immense, big enough to engulf the whole Earth. Well if we're going to make it home in time to watch 'House' we'd better take off!"*

## Secondary school sports results

TCS Tu Toa team finished second in its regional netball competition, qualifying for the New Zealand Secondary Schools' competition in Auckland on 7–10 October. Whitney Cassidy, Charmaine Smith and Sheridan Bignall were named in the Lower North Island Secondary Schools' tournament team, and Sheridan was Player of the Tournament. The team won the points difference trophy for gaining the highest margin between goals scored and goals conceded.

At the New Zealand Secondary Schools' golf tournament held in Wellington in September, TCS Tu Toa team came sixth. Individual scores put Adrian Burns in ninth place among the men while Maraea Durie was sixteenth in the women's field.

## See your work in print

We print student work in TCS News. If you've done some writing or artwork that you're proud of, send it to us. Give us a call or email first and we'll send a permission form for you to sign and return with it. If you've got computer access, send your work as a Word document or (for artwork) as a pdf to [media@correspondence.school.nz](mailto:media@correspondence.school.nz). Alternatively, you can post it in a green bag to:

TCS News  
Chief Executive's Office  
The Correspondence School  
Private Bag 39992  
Wellington Mail Centre  
Lower Hutt 5045



# Gateway update



Automotives, early childhood education and agriculture were the most popular industry choices for students joining the Gateway programme in 2008, the first year it's been offered at TCS. Students also had on-the-job training in libraries, meat processing works, boat building, retail, a radio station, the hospitality industry, general administration and hairdressing. Placements in building construction and veterinary nursing are in the pipeline.

Gateway Coordinator Kathryn Smith says it's been a positive start to the programme, which she hopes will expand to 50 placements in 2009.

'It's been a valuable experience for our students, and the unit standards they've earned on the job will stand them in good stead. It's been a great opportunity for them.'

'We've made good contacts with employers, too. Some of them have had Gateway students from other schools, so they're familiar with the programme. They're keen on it because it's a way for them to try out potential future staff.'

By July, 28 TCS students had already been in workplace training, with slightly more boys than girls joining the programme. Some students had completed their placements by the middle of the year, while others are still working. Kathryn has more placements to finalise, but she expects that the 40 places available would all be filled by the end of the school year.

If you're interested in applying for a Gateway placement in 2009, contact Kathryn Smith on 0800 65 99 88 extension 8552 or email [kathryn.smith@correspondence.school.nz](mailto:kathryn.smith@correspondence.school.nz).

The on-the-job training Gateway students are given includes the assessment of selected unit standards. The unit standards done depend on the industry and students' interests. Some of these are generic, such as first aid, while others are specific to the industry. A gateway placement agreement will offer at least 10 credits although some students have earned as many as 23 credits.

## Central South Kaiarahi

Alan Clark has been appointed to the role of Kaiarahi for the Central South region, which includes Taranaki, Manawatu, Wanganui, Wairarapa and the greater Wellington region. As Kaiarahi, Alan will play an important role within the region, developing partnerships with families, whanau, communities and other organisations as well as managing the region's liaison teachers and other in-region staff.

Alan will be a familiar face to many students and supervisors through his role as National Liaison Manager, which has seen him travel the country to provide leadership and support for the School's 20 liaison teachers, as well as representing the School at inter-agency meetings. At the time of going to print, appointments for the Southern, Northern and Central North regions were still to be announced.

### **Launching a career** continued from page 1

'You become a real jack-of-all-trades,' said Nathan.

He started out learning about laminating: cutting out and laying fibreglass and using the right chemicals with it. This work means using a gas mask, gloves, and a full body suit and it's not simple.

'You can't have any air bubbles, and if you muck up the chemicals, it won't work,' Nathan said. 'A big mistake can be really expensive.'

He's had the chance to do a lot of new things, and the scope of the work was beyond what he expected.

'It's been a lot more!' Nathan said. 'I had a shortened view of boat building. It opened my eyes to what boat building was. It can take you all over the world.'

After only days on the Gateway programme, Nathan was offered full time hours. Now his performance is being evaluated most weeks as part of a pre-apprentice trial. Soon he'll be considered for an apprenticeship, and that's a powerful motivator for Nathan to do his best work.

'I'd love to get an apprenticeship out of it. I can definitely see myself in this industry for the rest of my life.'

## Term dates for 2008/09

Term dates for TCS are based on dates set by the Ministry of Education for composite schools. The last day of the school year for 2008 is 17 December, and TCS will close for 2008 on 24 December.

Term dates for 2009 are:

Term 1: 29 January – 9 April

Term 2: 27 April – 3 July

Term 3: 20 July – 25 September

Term 4: 12 October – 8 December.

## ERO special review

The Education Review Office (ERO) has completed its second evaluative review of TCS, and found the School has put in place an active and systemic response to improve its performance in the areas identified by ERO's full review of TCS in 2007.

The ERO review team noted that clear progress has been made in implementing the new regionalised delivery model, and that steps to promote strong, supportive leadership and a collaborative culture are evident. You can read the full report on ERO's website at [www.ero.govt.nz](http://www.ero.govt.nz).

ERO's next review of TCS will be in 2009.

# Be a good cybercitizen!



## Things to know about Cybercitizenship

The teachers and staff of TCS care for the personal safety and well being of the students who are on our roll. Young people are likely to come across a range of material when using digital equipment. While a lot of this will be fun, helpful and useful, some of the content they view may be upsetting or cause them distress.



## What is Cyberspace?

Cyberspace is the online global place that can be entered through a variety of widely available digital equipment. It can provide benefits to kids through teaching and learning as well as an enjoyable source of entertainment. It can also make available useful links between family and friends; a place to meet new people; and a source of information on just about any topic.

## Cybersafety

Cybersafety is the safe and responsible use of digital equipment and of related equipment that can access the Internet. It is important to remember that these include things such as mobile phones, digital cameras and webcams. New Zealand children are exposed on a daily basis to both the wonderful benefits, and the potential risks, of cyberspace.

While they may be skilled in the use of digital equipment, young children may not yet have developed the understanding and

judgment to be able use Internet equipment safely and responsibly. Everyone has the right to be cybersafe, but adults share a special responsibility for the safety of children in this new space.

## What is Cybercitizenship?

Anyone who interacts online is a citizen of cyberspace. As young people learn to find their way round cyberspace in many different ways, it is important they learn the basics of good citizenship behaviour, including cybercitizenship.

Cybercitizenship is more than just knowing how to use digital equipment. It includes having the skills to weigh up the material found online, as well as being able to look after personal information. It also means being considerate to others and behaving in a responsible way towards other cybercitizens. It means being able to deal with potentially risky situations. By following the ground rules of cybercitizenship, young people are better equipped to get the best from the digital equipment that they use.

Remember ... just because a young person may appear to be skilled in the use of digital equipment this does not mean they have the necessary know-how to help keep them cybersafe.

For more on cybersafety, check out [www.netsafe.org.nz/](http://www.netsafe.org.nz/)

To learn about helping the very young online also check out [www.hectorsworld.com](http://www.hectorsworld.com)

TCS Action for Cybercitizenry (TAC)  
ICT PD Cluster – Future Pathways



## Mehrbano's bridge

Year 7 student Mehrbano built this bridge with her father and a family friend as part of the *Order or Chaos?* Integrated learning project for Years 7–10 students in the Central South region. After learning about different types of bridges, students were given a list of nine building materials to choose from and challenged to design and build their own. The bridge had to be at least one metre long, with a level deck and strong enough to support a load of one kilogram.