

MONTESSORI
CHILDREN'S
FOUNDATION



ABOUT the Desert Communities Project

Kiwirrkurra is the most remote community in Australia, situated on the edge of the Gibson Desert, Western Australia. Its people are connected to the other Pintupi speaking communities of Kintore and Papunya in the Northern Territory.

Kiwirrkurra is set on stunning landscape of vast desert country and is home to some outstanding painters of the Papunya Tula art movement. The school, however, like many schools in remote communities, has struggled to engage the children and help them achieve.

Through the dedication of Catherine Reed, and more recently, Andrea Mahiepala, and with the support

of MCF, two Montessori 3-6 programs have been established at the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School.

Together, parents, school staff and the wider community have celebrated the success of these programs, observing that the children are notably more independent and demonstrate greater confidence with early literacy and numeracy concepts.

As a result of the unique partnership between MCF and the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School, the impact of Montessori education is helping to shape the lives of these children and their community.

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The Land Schools Journey

In 2011, Catherine Reed, a teacher at the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School Kiwirrkurra Campus, contacted MCF seeking support. After spending considerable time researching and observing in a Montessori school in Perth, she had come to the conclusion that the Montessori approach was likely to be very effective for her students. By adapting the way her classroom operated and noting the improvements to the children's learning, she could see that implementing a Montessori 3-6 program would make a substantial difference.

With the help of MCF's Kay Boulden and Alex Dillon, a Montessori teacher recently returned from working in the US, Catherine introduced Montessori activities into the classroom. Almost immediately, she observed that the children's attendance, confidence, independence,

engagement and learning outcomes improved significantly.

In 2013, Catherine relocated to another of the Lands School campuses in the tiny community of Papulankutja (Blackstone). Here she opened a second Montessori 3-6 program and was thrilled to again see strong, rapid improvement. Catherine had left her class at Kiwirrkurra in the experienced hands of Montessori teacher, Andrea Mahiepala.

Representatives from MCF visit Kiwirrkurra and Blackstone to conduct professional development workshops to existing staff and meet with school and community leaders. MCF is working to strengthen the programs currently in operation and to develop training programs for teachers and assistants in remote desert schools.

SUPPORT the Montessori Children's Foundation

There are many ways you can support the ongoing work of MCF in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands School:

- **Sponsor**
- **Pro Bono**
- **Volunteer**
- **Mentor**
- **Donate**

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