

Primary entry #8: Kotara School



The Courage Chronicle



TECHNICALLY SAVVY: Kotara School students with their iPads.

Apple a day keeps pupils engaged

By ZAC from YELLOW CLASS

LAST year the Commonwealth Bank donated an iPad to Kotara School to help improve the education of the students.

Following this, the school received funding through a technology grant to purchase more iPads.

Once a week each class uses the iPads, which are installed with applications to enhance education.

Teacher-directed tasks are given to the students who then work independently or in groups to complete the tasks.

The students have used the iPads to direct their own movies, create puppet shows and present movie trailers that they have written.

Dylan, a year 4 student, said: "I enjoy using the iPads in class.

"My favourite application is iMovie. I like playing around with the app, making scary movies and trailers.

"I like that I can be an actor and work in a group directing the other students in their roles.

"I enjoy seeing myself and our hard work. When we watch the movies back it is funny seeing ourselves having fun and working in a group," he said.

Some of the students were lucky enough to go on an excursion to the Apple store at Charlestown.

The students and staff had a tutorial with the Apple staff on how to use the iPad, were allowed to search the application store, and learnt how to use the application GarageBand.

Support web for youth

By THE JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL NEXUS UNIT

CHILD and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is a great organisation in the Newcastle and Hunter Region that focuses on supporting children and teenagers with all sorts of mental health issues.

It has a range of outpatient units to benefit young people in times of mental health difficulty and stress.

CAMHS supplies support and help for mental illnesses, and there is an inpatient unit at John Hunter Hospital called Nexus, which is a safe and helpful place to treat mental illness for five to 18-year-olds, but predominantly teenagers.

CAMHS understands that times of mental health episodes can be a very distressing problem for all teenagers and children.

It provides free of charge treatment and help that not all parents can provide. Not only does CAMHS support the patient, but it also contributes further support for families.

It helps them to understand and learn how to extend the well-being and happiness of the child.

A lot of adolescents tend to keep problems to themselves and try to deal with the mental health issues on their own.

It is good for all young people experiencing these types of prob-



A SAFE PLACE: Young people and their families don't need to face mental illness alone.

lems to know that they are not alone and there are places for them to get help.

Times like these for adolescents are very difficult and hard for most unqualified people to understand; although they want to help, sometimes they say things that make the thoughts and feelings worse.

CAMHS can help the family

understand how to communicate without hurting the patient's feelings. They can provide a range of treatments and referrals to other services.

All teenagers and children need to know that if they are getting thoughts of self-harm or suicide, seeking help or speaking out is the best thing they can do.

There is always help around the corner, thanks to CAMHS. You can contact CAMHS by visiting hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/mh/services/mhsf/camhs to find information on CAMHS and its services.

Thanks to CAMHS, many children and adolescents have continued their lives without mental health issues.



CARVING IT UP: Kotara School students enjoy their after-school skateboarding session. Picture: Andy

Kids active and happy after school

By RED CLASS

KOTARA School provides students with the opportunity to participate in weekly electives held on Monday and Friday afternoons.

Last term students had tennis with Emma on Monday, and on Friday afternoons it was swimming at Newcastle Baths. This term it is skateboarding on Mondays and AFL on Fridays.

The Active After-school Communities initiative is run by the Australian Sports Commission and provides schools with activity options, coaches, and the opportunity to improve skills in a fun, safe, non-stressful environment.

Because the coaches make the activities fun and relevant, some students have joined sporting teams such as soccer and rugby league outside of school and now play in

local weekend competitions.

Sue Barben, regional coordinator, helps teachers facilitate the programs and liaise with coaches.

The students are having lots of fun and are learning new skills - especially at tennis, which is something none had played before.

The students just had their first skateboarding lesson and are already "carving it up".

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