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WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the July 2007 edition of the Realise A Better World Newsletter.

To achieve a better world for all, it is ideal for everyone to participate. People of all ages are able to contribute to moving towards a better world.

While roles may change throughout the course of one's life, a constant is their desire for a better world and a need to contribute in some way.

As humankind evolves and individuals discover satisfaction with their best efforts, greater opportunities for contributing will arise and an individual's impact will seem even stronger.

This newsletter is dedicated to all age groups for a better world.

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER WORLD

Education is a key to the improvement of the world. It is a significant element of society which allows continuity of progress from generation to generation. By informing the youth, social change takes place gradually towards a more aware society.

Greg Whitby (2007) suggests that schools are often designed with little consideration for how they affect the ability of children to learn. Most education is based on the principles relevant to the industrial revolution. He proposes that we now live in a knowledge age and our learning environments should reflect this to remain relevant.

In addressing the relevance of education, innovative approaches to three particular areas of learning have been taken; the environment or place of learning, what is learned, and how they learn.

A place must create a comfortable environment for any

predetermined activity to take place. Designing a school could provide options of learning environments where students could choose the place that suits their needs. Students are supported to determine their own learning based on their interests. They may also have options to choose methods of learning such as through one-to-one contact, as part of a class, from books or internet etc. (Greg Whitby, 2007)

These ideas contribute to those of a learner-centred approach as in a 'Democratic school'. Democratic schools (suggested by AERO) may possess the following characteristics:

- Shared decision making among students and staff
- A learner-centred approach where students choose their daily activities
- Equality amongst staff and students
- The community as an extension of the classroom

An example of these ideas in practise may be found at Pine Community School in Brisbane. The primary school was founded (1984) by a group of parents, to provide an education based on independent learning (PCS).



Pine Community School: <http://www.ug.net.au/~zzpcs/>

Both group and individual learning takes place using the Queensland Education Department curriculum as a guide and based on the child's interests. Children progress at their own pace rather than in grades or with classes, creativity is an important part of the learning, a healthy self-esteem and social skills are developed, the benefits of inclusiveness and a sense of awareness for society and the environment are cultivated, discipline is maintained through mutual trust and respect, and a high adult to child ratio which encourages parents and other community

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members to become involved in the school life of the children.

It provides an environment for academic, physical, social, emotional and creative development on the principle that 'happy children learn' (PCS).

In future generations the improvements made to education today will become an integral part of the evolution of society. An education where individuals are free to explore their passionate interests in a way that utilizes their talents may ultimately lead them to discover their purpose in life and how they might contribute to improving the world.

References:

Greg Whitby ABC Radio interview - <http://www.abc.net.au/queensland/conversations/stories/s1965836.htm?brisbane>
AERO (Alternative Educational Resource Organisation) - <http://www.educationrevolution.org/>
Pine Community School - <http://www.uq.net.au/~zzpcs/>

THE GREEN

The Green is a retirement village for environmentally aware seniors. Located in Brisbane, it also claims to be affordable (The Green).

Some of the facilities include; a bush pool, community hall, self-funded social club, community vegetable garden, community workshop, walking tracks, BBQ areas, and a large lagoon (The Green).

The 79 homes in the community will produce their own solar power, harvest its own rainwater, recycle its own waste water, and manage all other waste within the community. The dwellings are fitted with products and materials that allow them to be more self-sufficient, use less energy, use less water, and use less resources in their production than conventional products. Homes are designed for the climate which makes them warmer in winter and cooler in summer. All aspects of the designs reduce living costs and environmental impacts (The Green).

The houses are designed by SALA Homes who specialise in supplying pre-packaged 'kit' homes to anywhere in the world.

They strive to provide affordable, energy efficient, water efficient, attractive and practical housing with an efficient use of resources (SALA Homes).



SALA Homes: <http://www.salahomes.com.au/kit-01.html>

The Green is an example of the types of communities which are becoming more available through a growing market of aware people. Those who invest in such products are encouraging awareness in businesses, increasing the quality, the affordability and the availability of them. These are therefore positive steps towards healthier communities and a better world.

References:

The Green - <http://thegreen.com.au/>
SALA Homes - <http://www.salahomes.com.au/>

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Meeting: Informal discussion about how the group can improve the support it offers to members.

Date: Sunday, 15 July, 2007.

Time: 11am

Meeting place: Northey Street City Farm, Windsor, Brisbane - In the cafe or on the grass.

All suggestions, ideas and comments are most welcome. It would be great to see you there.

REALISE A BETTER WORLD



To receive these free monthly newsletters send a blank email to: realiseabetterworld@yahoo.com.au

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