

Raphael House

celebrating 25 years

1979 - 2004

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News Letter April 1979

As a result of our exhibition in Lower Hutt before Christmas, we met with a very kind gesture from Mr and Mrs John Ahern who offered us the use of their property at 953 High Street.

After all our fruitless searching and enquires throughout the year this offer seemed heaven-sent and we happily accepted.

We put our proposal to the City Council for its approval but this matter has proved a much longer procedure than we anticipated and therefore our start in February simply was not to be. Although final

approval has not been given (we expect this later in April) we are planning to open there next term.

The house and garden are in need of considerable work to adapt them to our needs but we are fortunate in being allowed to 'recreate' the property as we like.

There will be lots of cleaning, painting, carpentry, plumbing and gardening to be done but we are really looking forward to creating a beautiful home for our first Class I and Kindergarten. Initial work has already begun on the house and grounds and there will be a kind of 'ongoing working bee' throughout the May holidays to get things going.

Paul was first class one teacher, and he continued teaching at Raphael House until 2002, taking 3 cycles of primary children from class one through. Still a trustee, and part of PEG, he is now milking cows near Greytown.

The CARE group in education terms, he says, is one of the big achievements. The vision being that a family and school should together know and educate the child as wholly and fully as possible.

To Trudi and Paul
at the Opening of "Raphael House" School.

The Soil
here is fertile
and the Stars
are numerous and clear.

May the Earth
and the World of the Spirit
bless the Seed
which is about to be sown
and to the Teachers and Children
bring Strength and Joy.

Avalon,
10 June, 1979. Gert Christeller

News Letter August 1979

Our opening was delayed two weeks whilst waiting for the approval from the Dept. of Education.

However the morning of June 11th saw twelve children arrive at their new school - seven in the kindergarten, five in Class I. Because of the delay in official procedures the opening was necessarily unheralded, yet many visitors and prospective parents have visited the school.

Approval has now been granted and the roll has increased to 15 in the Kindergarten, 7 in Class I.

The school management committee has decided to take a 5-year lease on the property as it would serve admirably for a second kindergarten or classrooms until building are completed in Belmont.

The result of all our hard work is a small but beautiful little school, of course we will soon outgrow this and already the committee is looking for a house for Class I next year.

Paul Denford

Interviews with founders Trudi Schladitz & Paul Denford

JILL HEMMING

Trudi:

How the money came in was extraordinary. Miraculous. Francis Edmunds (founder and director of Emerson College, England) came over to do a lecture series.

Mr Edmunds, Laurie Haines, a former (school) student of his, and Iain Trousdall's father, Alex, all came for lunch. They all stayed. At 5 o'clock they were still there, talking. Suddenly Mr Edmunds, sat straight up in his chair. "These people want to start a school," he said. "Can you help them?" And they did.

All we needed was \$5000 to put down as a deposit. And the \$5000 we got. Letters went around and then my father gave some.

It had to be beautiful. I needed this. I couldn't see how children could be properly educated, without a space. They need a proper outer surroundings, an outer skin.

Paul:

Frances Edmunds said "You need land."

Alex knew someone who owned a lot of

the Western Hills, Arthur Luey, who had land for sale. We went to the anthroposophical society first. Surprising things started to happen. An elderly couple in Coromandel sent \$750.

In that way we began to accumulate a fund. My sister, sent \$2000. It was all she had. Trudi's father gave us \$10,000, and we got the toilet block done, and the basics at High Street. We moved on a room from a church in Stokes Valley - it's now the primary school craft room. Later he gave another \$10,000.

We needed about another \$21,000 to secure the place. For us who had nothing, it was an enormous amount. No money, a list of a few names. It was a fairly thought-provoking decision. Trudi and I went onto the site. Thinking it through. What did we stand to lose? Laurie had asked us that day. We stood to lose \$5000. What did we stand to gain? A school. Over the bush, directly over us, flew a white dove. On its own, at that particular point - if ever there was a sign, this confirmed it. So we signed for the land.

Trudi:

As the school was on the way and had started, Laurie Haines said 'but you must give the school a name. What about Raphael?' It went into my heart. I thought - how is that possible? Unbelievable!

Of course, Raphael is the healer, carrying the Mercury staff with two snakes.

Raphael is also one of my beloved painters. Known by the spiritual investigation of Rudolf Steiner to have been reincarnated in the German poet Novalis. I discovered Novalis as a teenager.

This individuality is so holy, so precious, that I would never have dared to think of naming the school, Raphael. And here was someone else suggesting the name.

So Mark Geard carved a sign announcing Raphael House Rudolf Steiner School, and this was placed over the gateway.

NEXT WEEK: WORK BEGINS ON MATUHI STREET, BELMONT

