



The Natural Phenomena Conference 25th – 27th November, 2011 Presenter Bios & Workshop details

Keynote Speakers

Dr Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere, Waikaremoana, NZ

Bios: Dr Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere has been strongly influenced by teachings that go back over 12,000 years. Her book *Te Wheke - A Celebration Of Infinite Wisdom*, is an introduction to these teachings. Rose has been on lecture tours on Te Wheke throughout Europe, including Germany, Austria and Italy. She has represented Aotearoa New Zealand internationally as an educationalist; written a monograph called *AKO: Concepts and Learning in The Māori Tradition*; held a Visiting Teacher Fellowship at the University of Waikato, Hamilton New Zealand in 1982; taught from preschool to tertiary; and researched ancient teachings in the Americas, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Great Britain, East Asia and the South Pacific.

Rose is a holder of the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal and was honoured as a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire 1996. She attained a Doctorate of Literature at Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand 1996. Rose has her own consultancy called *Ao Ako* which focuses on global learning. She is also a Director of the Four Winds Foundation - an international body that works with indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Marcie Oltman, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Marcie Oltman is an Early Childhood Nature Education Specialist from Minneapolis, MN, USA. Recently, she served as the Director of Early Childhood Education at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee, WI, overseeing the expansion and restructuring of the early childhood nature education department. Previously, she was the Director of Tamarack Nature Center White Bear Township, MN where she oversaw the development of a multi-year project designed to transform Tamarack from a traditional nature center with a cognitive approach to environmental education towards an interdisciplinary center that encourages visitors to discover the value of nature through art, play, exploration, and inquiry. She is also the creator and designer for Tamarack's natural play area, The Wild Place and My Nature Preschool.

Marcie is the founding chair of the Minnesota Early Childhood Environmental Education Consortium and editor of *Natural Wonders: A Guide to Early Childhood for Environmental Educators*. She has also published articles *Environmental Education at the Early Childhood Level*, *Legacy*, and *Cooperative Learning* magazines. Marcie has a BA in Biology, an MS in Environmental Education and is a state certified early childhood educator with an M. Ed in Early Childhood Education.

Marcie is also a principal in the exhibit design/build firm *Kidzibits, LLC.* in Minneapolis where she develops exhibits for children's museums and nature centers around the country and serves as a consultant on exhibit and building design, early childhood outdoor environments and early childhood environmental curricula.

Toni and Robin Christie, Child Space, NZ

Childspace Early Childhood Institute is recognised as leading the way for excellence in early childhood education and professional development. Toni Christie is the Oceania representative on the Nature Action Collaboration for Children – an international group concerned with re-connecting the worlds children with nature.

Robin Christie delights in designing natural playscapes for children throughout Aotearoa.

Inspirational Speakers

Toi Te Rito Maihi, Waimate, NZ

Toi is a great grandmother whose attempt at retirement is a total failure. She continues to follow her interests: people, particularly children, the education of both in the broadest sense; all things Maori and the environment, expressing her perceptions verbally, and as a writer & poet, artist & weaver.

Presenter Bios & Workshop Details

Lorna Douglas, Whangarei, NZ [Senior Lecturer, Northtec]

Workshop title: **Climate change: what does it have to do with early childhood education?**

Climate change is no longer a phenomenon of the future, we are feeling the effects already. Those effects will increase in severity over the rest of this century, in other words during the lifetimes of the young children who are currently in early childhood education. What can be done to help prepare the very young for a future that looks like it will be very different from how we ourselves grew up? This presentation will focus on how to improve the sustainability of early childhood centres and identify skills the under fives can learn that will help ensure they are more resilient in an uncertain world.

Personal Bios: My passion for education for sustainability (EFS) has influenced my life in several ways. My Masters' thesis involved developing a framework for evaluating EFS courses, I co-authored the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's report See change: learning and education for sustainability and I have taught on NorthTec's Conservation & Environmental Management programme since 2004. In my home and family life I try to put into practice my sustainability principles, including encouraging my own children to cherish and respect the natural world around us. I strongly believe we need to forge much deeper connections between people and the environment, for the wellbeing of all species.

Anna Murphy, Whangarei NZ, [Eco Solutions]

Workshop title: **"Sustainable Centres"**

This presentation will cover ways that you can "Green" your centre. Looking at waste, water, energy, shopping and cleaning. Simple ideas that you can put into practice to make your centre more environmentally sustainable.

We will also cover developing a sustainability or environmental policy for your centre.

Personal Bios: I am an educator working mainly in Primary schools to inspire action for sustainability. I deliver education focused on waste minimisation, recycling and composting. I work for a community organisation called CBEC EcoSolutions, which has been operating on Northland for over twenty years

Emma Deering & Antionette Jordan, Whangarei NZ [Teachers, Open Spaces Pre School]

Workshop title: **"The Real Wild Woods"**

A presentation by two of the Open Spaces Teaching team. How the Wild Woods started, our journey, an overview of the programme. We will tour the Wild Woods showing how children connect with nature and become their own risk managers.

Personal Bios:

Brent Mawson, NZ [Principal Lecturer in School of Science, Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland]

Workshop title: **Affordance of outdoor areas**

Affordance relates to the way in which an individual views and uses the environment (Niklasson & Sandberg 2010). Various levels of affordance can be identified; potential, perceived, utilised, shaped. This presentation will use the 'Wild Woods' as a case study to explore these levels through the eyes of a child and an adult and suggest ways in which adults may be able to help children realise more of the potential affordance of outdoor areas.

Personal Bios: Dr Brent Mawson is a Principal Lecturer in School of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, the Faculty of Education in The University of Auckland. He lectures in early childhood curriculum and children's technology play. Brent has spent the last five years researching children's collaborative play and leadership styles. His research-based publications include a book, book chapter and many journal articles.

Jonny Holtom, Wellington NZ, [Early Childhood Educator, Childspace]

Workshop title: **Building an environmental Art Table**

Using a recycled pallet we will construct a planter table with grasses growing in the centre. The table is designed that the grass is in the canvas and the natural materials in the compartments around the table are used to create natural sculptural art upon it. Come join Memory Loader & Jonny Holtom as we build together and gather resources to create an exploratory tool that can be used outside to bring nature inside your centre.

Personal Bios: Jonny is a member of the Childspace whanau, involved in every aspect of early childhood educational pursuits and beyond. He is an active teacher, builder, administrator, gardener and father. His passion for connecting children with the natural world has manifested as gardening with children, reforestation projects, building with natural materials and inspiring articles published both nationally & internationally.

Pania Baxter, Whangarei, NZ [ECE Teacher]

Workshop title: **"Flax resources for infants and toddlers"**

We will be making a toy each. This will include flax preparation and weaving (not as easy as it sounds!!). We will discuss other ideas for flax resources for infants and toddlers. I will provide some patterns for you to try at home. We will also discuss gathering kaupapa and ways to clean flax resources. You will leave with your own taonga. Let's create something special together.

Personal Bios - Kia Ora My name is Pania and I am a wife and mother of two. I have worked in ECE for 12 yrs. I grew up in a small country area called Matawaia where I developed my passions for the natural world, te reo and tikanga Maori.

I have been working with infants and toddlers and have enjoyed creating harakeke (flax) resources for them. I am not a perfectionist, although what I create is valued by children, teachers and whanau. I am still learning but am looking forward to sharing my knowledge with others.

Lisa Ford, Naenae, NZ [Head Teacher, Naenae kindergarten]

Workshop title: **Inclusive means everyone**

Lisa's specialist subject is looking at ways to work sustainably and in partnership with low socio-economic communities. Lisa is able to offer you strategies for engaging communities that have barriers to participation and the development of an early childhood kaupapa which is truly inclusive. She highlights ways in which projects like transforming environments can bring a community together, and create a genuine sense of connectedness to the past, present and future.

Personal Bios: Lisa has worked in a range of early childhood settings both urban and rural. She currently resides and works in Lower Hutt at the local Kindergarten.

Lisa grew up on a farm at the entrance of the Whangarei harbour, and has a real affinity to the work being carried out at Open Spaces in connecting children and their families to the natural environment.

Justin Naish, Dunedin, NZ [Teacher, Early Childhood on Stafford]

Workshop title: **Resiliency with infants & toddlers. The outside opportunities.**

Being able to access outdoor playscapes for infants and toddlers in this modern way of „too safe and too PC“ (not for nature).

How does being outside in a Natural Playscape develop resilience for infants and toddlers?

Sharing in his experience Justin will lead you in a journey of excitement and of being outside with infants and toddlers – The Outside Experience.

Experiences from videos and photos of the Under Two Crew at Early Childhood on Stanford. Infants and toddlers outside in all seasons experiencing the many physical, social and sensory opportunities that only being outside can provide. Developing a resilient mindset to the promotion of Outdoor Environments and enhancing play as a model for exploration and learning. Enhancing and maximising the outside opportunities for Infants and Toddlers. Why resilience? How does this belief benefit the learning of infants and toddlers outside. Is your glass half empty or half full, perceptions of rules and regulations and challenges in your playscapes. In the Outdoor Playscape “Risk and Challenge” have almost become the dirty words – keeping children out and away from being able to participate in the Environment. What are some of the benefits for infants and toddlers of being outside, and how does developing a resilient mindset enable our children to become confident, competent learners who get out and get life done to their upmost.

Personal Bios: Justin is passionate about being outside in the natural outdoor environment. Inspired by his Centres Goals and Policies Justin has a “get out and have a go” type of attitude when working alongside infants and toddlers at Early Childhood on Stanford. Having been inspired by many visuals and “Outdoor Education” courses Justin continues to involve and implement opportunities for infants and toddlers to experience the joy and amazement of being outside at a young age. Surrounded in a suburban woodland section full of open spaces, large trees and a multi leveled section with committed teachers keen on being in the environment = “Action Station”. Being outside is the motivation and the children enjoy the many experiences that are on offer. For infants and toddlers being able to participate is crucial to their overall child development in its supreme fullness. If Justin is not teaching he is outside in his garden or playing Reggae tunes.

Roger Caughley, Whangarei, NZ, [Ece Teacher, Open Spaces]

Workshop title: **Strike a light**

An Interactive workshop outlining the introduction of fire to the curriculum at our centre. The benefits of this including the positive aspects of children being given the opportunity to assess risk.

Personal Bios: I have worked in ECE for 20 years and hold a double Dip ECE. Prior to my employment at Open Spaces and a short time at Christopher and Robin, I spent 17 years at Ahipara Sandhoppers. I have presented at a conference outlining my views of being male in a predominantly female dominated environment and have been part of a MOE push to recruit more men to work in this occupation.

Anna Gentry, Ngunguru NZ, [ECE facilitator, Environmental educator, NaturePlay NZ]

Workshop title: **Growing in Spirit – a child's journey with nature.**

Anna returns this year to share further ancient wisdom to assist children to navigate the 21st century. The spirit of the child is often misunderstood or ignored. Sometimes it is more comfortable working and understanding the physical, emotional and mental aspects of childhood.

Anna will share with you nature's role in supporting & developing our children, their body, soul and spirit, particularly the role of nature power of our forest of Aotearoa.

Personal Bios: There hasn't been a time in Anna's life when she has not had nature beside her. Her life time includes a great passion for creativity and design, the earth and plants, horses and people. All her working life has involved educating young people through nature and/ or adventures in nature. A trained and experienced teacher, lecturer and mother she takes on her role with a huge sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of our children and earth. Her current work takes her into early childhood centres providing workshops, training & in centre support. When not educating or being a mum she enjoys playing with her herd of horses naturally and working with sacred maori plant medicine to restore balance and harmony to people and the planet

Kathryn Hart & Annette Sheehy, Tauranga Kindergarten Association NZ,

Workshop title: **It's more than a “nice time in the Bush”**

As early childhood education practitioners on the journey of “Nature Based Education” we need to know Why we are engaging in nature based education, How nature based education links to our teaching philosophy and pedagogical values. What are the expected outcomes and goals for children? Based on our professional opportunities and experience we will explore with participants what nature based education looks like in an Aotearoa New Zealand context.



Personal Bios: Annette has been a kindergarten teacher since the very early 70's. Currently senior teacher for the Tauranga Kindergarten Assn. In 2009 I co won the Margaret Blackwell travel study award with my colleague Kathryn Hart, This allowed us the opportunity to travel to Europe and observe in the forest kindergartens in Germany, Denmark, England and Wales and extend our knowledge and understanding of this approach to ECE. I am currently the senior teacher rep on New Zealand Kindergartens Inc.

Kathryn has been an early childhood teacher for over 20 years with experience in kindergarten, childcare, home based ECE and lecturing for a national training provider. In 2009 Annette and I won the Margaret Blackwell travel study award. This award allowed us to travel to Europe and observe in the Forest Kindergartens of Germany, Denmark, England and Wales. This inspiring opportunity extend our knowledge and understanding of nature based early childhood education.

Pennie Brownlie, NZ [Babywise. Accomplished author & early childhood educator]

Workshop title: **Calling All Earthlings...**

Humans have evolved over millennia in relationship with the Earth. We are a part of the Unity called the Biosphere. Accordingly, the Earth Mother is the number one 'curriculum' for all Earthlings. She offers more 'subjects', 'projects', 'extensions' and 'themes' with more subtleties, beauty, harmony and elegance than any one person could exhaust in a life-time. It is time for responsible Earthlings to stop raising children in captivity, and to get outside and play. In this workshop we explore just what that might be like in practice.

Personal Bios: Pennie has a passion for play, trees, flowers, skies, beaches, ants... for Life really. She is deeply concerned that more and more children are being actively prevented from playing outside as their Souls and Intellect demand. So her other passion is actively inciting parents and teachers to throw away the remote and the timetables - and to get outside and play. Children's Souls depend on it.

Marcie Oltman, Minneapolis, MN, USA

Workshop title: **Real Experiences for Real Kids: How to bring authenticity into your nature programme.**

Young children want, need and deserve authentic experiences with real, natural objects. In this age of technological wonders, it is easy to forget the importance of experiencing something real—baking bread from scratch or eating snow peas right off the vine. Come and discover easy ways to bring real textures, smells, tastes, and experiences into—and out of-- your classrooms.

Personal Bios: Marcie Oltman is an Early Childhood Nature Education Specialist from Minneapolis, MN, USA. Recently, she served as the Director of Early Childhood Education at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee, WI, overseeing the expansion and restructuring of the early childhood nature education department. Previously, she was the Director of Tamarack Nature Center White Bear Township, MN where she oversaw the development of a multi-year project designed to transform Tamarack from a traditional nature center with a cognitive approach to environmental education towards an interdisciplinary center that encourages visitors to discover the value of nature through art, play, exploration, and inquiry. She is also the creator and designer for Tamarack's natural play area, The Wild Place and My Nature Preschool.

Marcie is the founding chair of the Minnesota Early Childhood Environmental Education Consortium and editor of Natural Wonders: A Guide to Early Childhood for Environmental Educators. She has also published articles Environmental Education at the Early Childhood Level, Legacy, and Cooperative Learning magazines. Marcie has a BA in Biology, an MS in Environmental Education and is a state certified early childhood educator with an M. Ed in Early Childhood Education.

Genevieve Simperingham, NZ, [Peaceful Parenting Institute]

Workshop title: **How to foster Emotional Intelligence in your Centre & why that means a happier learning environment**

With the tips and insights you'll gain in this workshop, you'll return to work inspired and ready to approach challenges amongst children with more confidence and a revitalized enthusiasm.

We now know that emotional intelligence reduces violence, increases self-esteem and social skills and provides the best foundation for learning and development.

Genevieve teaches the necessary skills that are needed to foster the emotionally safe and inclusive environment that allows children to operate (and cooperate!) at their best.

Learn more about;

- ☒ Forming, maintaining and repairing attachments with babies and young children.
- ☒ Transforming unhealthy behaviour by relating to the feelings beneath the behaviour.
- ☒ Listening skills that foster connection and trust.
- ☒ Setting limits while staying connected.
- ☒ Conflict resolution and problem solving skills.

Personal Bios: Genevieve Simperingham is the co-founder of the Peaceful Parent Institute and is a Certified Aware Parenting instructor, having trained with Dr. Aletha Solter PhD, psychologist and author of four ground-breaking parenting books. Genevieve is one of 65 instructors worldwide and the only one in New Zealand. She is also a Heart to Heart Parenting Facilitator, trained by Robin Grille to teach his parenting programs. Robin Grille, psychologist and psychotherapist is based in Sydney and is the author of 'Parenting for a Peaceful World' and 'Heart to Heart Parenting'. The Peaceful Parent Institute offers courses and coaching for teachers, parents and all those interested in practicing respectful ways of relating to babies, children and teens. Genevieve shares her in-depth study of many renowned experts in the fields of early childhood development and neuroscience, as well as her experience with clients and groups over 19 years and as a parent working with this model for 14 years.

Mandy Sunlight, NZ, [Tutor in flax weaving, a tikanga (protocols) Maori perspective at maraes]

Workshop title: **Traditional Flax weaving**

Personal Bios: Kia ora, ko Mandy Sunlight taku ingoa. I am a pakeha with seven children whose whakapapa to Te Hikutu hapu, Hokianga. I have been weaving for over 25 years, and pass on my skills and knowledge through tutoring from a tikanga (protocols) Maori perspective at marae throughout Northland with support from kaumatua and kuia (elders). I have been invited by the British Museum in July 2010 to tutor flax



weaving and research taonga (treasures) Maori held in the archives over there. This is a practise base knowledge recovery process with the dissemination of process' and practises the research outcome. Recently I have been involved in the Mokopuna Ora Project weaving wahakura (safe sleeping baskets) for Maori babies at risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), the ongoing result of colonisation. I have a relaxed and easy teaching style.

Anja Geelen, Wellington, NZ [Little Earth Montessori]

Workshop title: **Earth teach me**

Papatuanuku provides the richest playground we can imagine. Despite this, many of the children in our care are still spending the majority of their time in indoor rooms and adult controlled outdoor playgrounds. How can we use Mother Earth to teach our children to become empowered global citizens who feel connected to the natural world and understand their place in the web of life.

Personal Bios: Anja is a blog writer, Montessori teacher and the founder of two enviro nature preschools. Tawa Montessori Preschool and Little Earth Montessori are well sought after preschools in the Wellington region, with the latter purposely build following environmental conscious design and building principles. Both preschools are known for their natural outdoor environments and their empowered sustainable community of children, families and staff. Anja has presented workshops on reconnecting young children with nature and naturalising outdoor environments for early childhood centres, both in New Zealand and in the US. Growing up as a freerange child in the southern part of the Netherlands, Anja had a good dose of Vitamine N. For the last twenty years she has been living with her family at the far end of the Earth where the birds wake first and the sun shines through the rakaus on Aotearoa - New Zealand. In cyberspace, Anja is known as eyesonnature, where she blogs about the awesome lessons Earth teaches her and the children at her preschools.

Toni & Robin Christie, Wellington NZ, [Childspace Institute]

Workshop title: **Human Sundial**

Join the crazy Childspace crew and learn how to build your own human sundial. A great way to engage children in daily and seasonal cycles & patterns.

Personal Bios: Childspace Early Childhood Institute is recognised as leading the way for excellence in early childhood education and professional development. Toni Christie is the Oceania representative on the Nature Action Collaboration for Children – an international group concerned with re-connecting the worlds children with nature.

Robin Christie delights in designing natural playscapes for children throughout Aotearoa.

Claire Maley-Shaw, Fiordland Kindergarten, Te Anau, NZ [Teacher Fiordland Kindergarten]

Workshop title: **So why a Nature Discovery Programme?**

Visit the local park midweek in Te Anau and the bush will not only ring with the sounds of birds but the excited chatter and laughter of a small group of children exploring nature from Fiordland Kindergarten.

So why a Nature Discovery Programme?

I have always been passionate about nature and had for many years as a teacher I felt that the connection to the land could be and should be linked into children's experiences in a meaningful way.

Towards the end of 2009 we began the journey of introducing the Nature discovery programme; this entailed taking a group of older children out for one morning a week to experience nature.

The name itself is reflective of our practice, we didn't want to call it a forest Kindergarten as we wanted the programme to be more than just a bush experience, and reflect the findings of other researchers from around the world in a New Zealand context.

Personal Bios: Born and bred a Southlander- I spent my formative years on a farm near Bluff, where I was free to wander to the nearby bush to pick blackberries, catch fresh water crayfish in the small creek in the paddock over the hill from my home, or walk to the top of the farm where I would sit amongst the rocks looking at the view of Rakiura (Stewart Island) and watch the skinks playing among the rocks, or lie back in the sun and watch the clouds going by. At the tender age of 16 I was accepted for Kindergarten teaching training in Dunedin, 2 years later I had a supernumerary position at Bluff Kindergarten, then at a couple of Kindergartens in Invercargill.

In 1978 I accepted a teaching position in Te Anau with no intention of making it my permanent home. A husband, (Hunter) a small farm near Manapouri and two beautiful daughters Phoebe 24 and Courtney 25 I am still here. I am now teaching many children of children I first taught on arrival in Te Anau I have always been very passionate about conservation and sustainability, and where possible have always incorporated this in both my home life and work.

Marcie Oltman, Minneapolis, MN, USA

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interdisciplinary center that encourages visitors to discover the value of nature through art, play, exploration, and inquiry. She is also the creator and designer for Tamarack's natural play area, The Wild Place and My Nature Preschool. Marcie is the founding chair of the Minnesota Early Childhood Environmental Education Consortium and editor of *Natural Wonders: A Guide to Early Childhood for Environmental Educators*. She has also published articles in *Environmental Education at the Early Childhood Level*, *Legacy*, and *Cooperative Learning* magazines. Marcie has a BA in Biology, an MS in Environmental Education and is a state certified early childhood educator with an M. Ed in Early Childhood Education.

Mairtown Kindergarten, Whangarei NZ, [Kim, Christine & Donna]

Workshop title: **A Natural Journey.**

This workshop covers our teams journey in creating an early childhood environment inspired by nature, the process of implementing change and moving towards an extension of the curriculum by setting up our 'Nature Programme' - providing weekly excursions into Mairpark for 10 children.

We will provide a background on our progression towards running a Nature Programme. It begins in the Kindergarten with inspiration from Reggio, Steiner, Papatuanuku and a passionate team.

We are also happy to open our Kindergarten for viewing and a discussion forum for interested parties.

Personal Bios: Kim, Zair, Christine and Donna of Mairtown Kindergarten have an authentic passion of natural environments.

The past year has seen this team commit to major changes both aesthetically and in their pedagogical practice, to provide a nature based curriculum for children founded on rich educational experiences in a natural well resourced centre and beyond in their surrounding community, Mairpark.