



IMPROVED GROUNDS AHEAD: Blue Skies project team Paula Miotto, Alpine Children's Services manager of marketing and programs Susan Anehagen, Shannon Macey, Sean Hynes, Jade Cartwright, Jenny Rinaldo, Julie Sinnett and Helen Collins with plans for the Dig It, Make It, Splash It project about to unfold.

Outdoor play area on MVCC agenda

CHILDREN attending the Mountain View Children's Centre will soon enjoy a greatly upgraded play area that will also enhance their learning.

The Blue Skies project team, made up of enthusiastic parents and staff at the centre in Myrtleford, is gearing up to transform a section of the outdoor play-space and need community support.

It was noted in the annual parent surveys that families were dissatisfied with the outdoor environment; more specifically, families noted the area looked tired and in need of attention.

Educators indicated this space had the potential to offer great learning opportunities, but requires a major overhaul.

In 2012, outdoor play specialist Patie Morgan visited the centre to conduct a site visit and to present to staff on the importance of outdoor playspaces.

Through her discussions with staff Ms Morgan produced a five year concept plan for the space, incorporating a clever redesign of the outside area.

To tackle this project, Blue Skies has been formed made up of parent volunteers and staff to dissect the plan and select an area to focus and improve each year.

This led to Dig It, Make It, Splash It.

The 'Dig it' part of the project will be a space that encourages exploratory play by offering three separate digging areas: sand, dirt and gravel. Playing in this space provides opportunities for the children to develop strong muscles when they dig, shovel, lift, carry, tunnel, and rake.

'Make it' will feature a timber decked space that links the diggings areas. This central space will become an area for children to make and create,

otherwise known as a "sand kitchen" by the children. A range of recycled equipment such as old cake tins, kettles, saucepans etc. will be available for the children, and pouring, sifting, moulding, drawing, patting, and decorating all help develop fine motor skills.

'Splash it' includes a dry creek bed area with a hand water pump that is connected to a rainwater tank. Children therefore have to pump to obtain water for garden watering and play. The physical and mental interaction will help instil the importance of rainwater, here and around the world.

Blue Skies project team would be grateful any material donations, in-kind support or cash contributions.

For information or to make a donation, contact Mountain View Children's Centre on 5752 2111.