

# BLOSSOMING WITH CARE

A newly opened childcare centre in the Mount holds true to its philosophy of creating authentic, inspiring early childhood experiences.

WORDS CATHERINE SYLVESTER



Alisha Merriman



**A**lisha Merriman had a clear vision of exactly what gap she wanted to fill when creating an early childhood education centre. She knew, not only because of her many years as a teacher in this sector, but also firsthand, as a mother of two young children. What she envisioned was a unique learning environment for children and their whānau, where they could thrive, grow and learn.

**Bloesem (“Blossom”)** – a nod to Alisha’s Dutch heritage – is precisely what the centre believes its tamariki will do. Backed by research highlighting the importance of environment being pivotal to learning, the centre has a calming feel to it. Walls are painted in neutral colours, with spaces left uncluttered. “Aesthetically pleasing environments enhance the children’s learning journey,” Alisha explains.

**By creating physical** spaces that are enriching for children to learn and grow in, Alisha and her team share their passion for creating inspiring new experiences daily. The team carefully create a teaching plan together, incorporating invitations to play based on suggestions from the children. Their aim is to instil a love of learning in their community.

**With the first** Bloesem opening in Te Puke in April 2019, the team have taken the time to firmly establish their vision and strong relationships with the children, whānau and staff. A high priority for Alisha is that they stay true to the “why” of Bloesem, and that means ensuring the right team of people working together to uphold the vision, philosophy and consistency of the centre. “Keeping it authentic is so important,” says Alisha. “At Bloesem, children and whānau are part of a nurturing, caring, joyful, tranquil environment.”

**The Te Puke** centre has thrived, despite the unexpected arrival of a global pandemic less than a year after opening. So when a spacious site opened up in Alisha’s own neighbourhood, the Mount, she knew it was the perfect time to expand the vision and provide another community with the inspiring Bloesem way of early childhood learning.

**Opened in August**, Bloesem Mount Maunganui also carries the vision statement: “Value and honour whanaungatanga, taiao, rangatiratanga which reflects the good of reciprocal relationships, for the good of the environment and for the good of growing self-confidence.”

**With a strong** philosophy and a growing need for more quality early childhood education centres, Bloesem is sure of its identity and what it offers the communities it is part of. **U**

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"AT BLOESEM, CHILDREN AND WHĀNAU ARE PART OF A NURTURING, CARING, JOYFUL, TRANQUIL ENVIRONMENT."



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