



**The Natural Phenomena is the first and only  
"Nature Education" Early Childhood Conference in NZ**

**Conference 2010 Presenter BIOS**

November 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 2010

In the Wild Woods / Glenbervie - Tutukaka Coast

Keynote Speakers:

1. **Rusty Keeler** - Planet Earth Playscapes, Spencer, NY, USA
2. **Ken Finch** - President & Founder of Green Hearts Institute from Nebraska, USA

Presenters:

- Aplin Dean**, NaturePlay NZ, Environmental educator& Outdoor instructor, NZ
- Brownlie Pennie**, Babywise, Accomplished author & early childhood educator, NZ
- Gentry Anna**, NaturePlay NZ, Dip Tch, Bed, ECE facilitator, Environmental educator, NZ
- Gibbs Murray**, Lecturer, Visual Arts, Northec, Whangarei, NZ
- Greenfield Cheryl**, Programme Leader of the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), NZ
- Guiney Sue**, Dip Tchng (ECE), Kindergarten teacher, Whangarei, NZ
- Holtom Jonny**, Early Childhood Educator, Childspace, Wellington, NZ
- Mate Poa & Aggie Wynyard**, Mokopuna o Moerewa Early Childhood Education and Care Centre Moerewa NZ
- Murphy Anna**, Eco Solutions, Whangarei, NZ
- Oltman Marcie**, -- an Early Childhood Nature Education Specialist from Minneapolis, USA
- Open Spaces Staff**, Open Spaces Preschool Academy, Whangarei, NZ
- Petrenko Linda**, Dip Tch ECE, BED, Small Kauri ECE centre, Mangere Bridge, Auckland, NZ
- Simperingham Genevieve**, Peaceful Parenting Institute, NZ
- Sunlight Mandy**, Lecturer, Flax weaving expert, NZ
- Zwack Annemarie**, Spencer, NY, USA



**Keynote Speakers:**

**Rusty Keeler** - Planet Earth Playscapes, Spencer, NY, USA

Rusty Keeler is an artist / designer with a unique sensitivity to the sights, sounds and experiences of childhood. He has a deep belief in the beauty and importance of play in the development of children and his designs reflect his sincere desire to create a more beautiful world in which to grow and explore. Rusty works throughout the world creating play environments for children and lectures at colleges and conferences internationally. He is the author of the book Natural Playscapes.

**Ken Finch** - President & Founder of Green Hearts Institute, Nebraska, USA



Ken is the president and founder of green hearts institute for nature in childhood: A young non-profit conservation organization dedicated to restoring and strengthening the bonds between children and nature. Based in Omaha, Nebraska, USA, green hearts provides educational advocacy about the value of nature play, as well as providing training and consulting services nationwide helping families and organizations (including early childhood organisations) to bring children and nature back together.

Ken has spent 36 years in the environmental education profession, working primarily with early childhood and elementary-age students. He holds a master's degree in environmental education, and is a past national president of the association of nature center administrators. During his long career he has supervised three nature centers, overseen two nature-and-science-based preschools, and has served as a senior manager in two children's museums. Ken is a champion for combining the strengths of the early childhood and environmental education fields.

Keynote speech:

"Frequent, nature-based play has been shown to be the most common influence on the development of life-long conservation values. At the same time, it is a near-perfect fit with the full spectrum of the developmental needs of young children: physical, emotional, social, creative, and intellectual. presenter ken finch will share these understandings, augmented with a good dose of anecdotes and -- hopefully -- your own stories!

... Ken is a veteran environmental educator and nature center leader in the United States, and now leads green hearts, a small nonprofit that is dedicated to restoring and strengthening the bonds between children and nature.

## **Presenters:**

### **Aplin Dean**

NaturePlay NZ. Environmental educator & Outdoor instructor, NZ

Dean has been in love with the outdoors and nature from a very young age. For over 10 years now he has been taking New Zealanders into nature as a professional Outdoor Instructor & Environmental Educator. Deans expertise are in developing human potential particularly in a team environment. He has developed unique leadership training and team development programmes with corporate and senior secondary students utilizing the natural world as the teacher.

As a tertiary lecturer in outdoor education he is most interested in training the trainer to access the natural world with people of all ages. Teaching skills in outdoor safety management (risk management) is a strength.

With over 10 years traveling to interesting places most people leave alone, he is simply a practical guy who has built his own home from natural materials, and enjoys making, creating, and solving problems with natural timbers and his own hands NaturePlay NZ

### **Brownlie Pennie**

Babywise, Accomplished author & early childhood educator, NZ

Pennie is in love with Life - the ants, the trees, the winds, the waves, tuis, cockroaches ... all of it. Her passion is to ponder on the miracle of these Natural Phenomena

### **Gibbs Murray**

Lecturer, Visual Arts, Northtec, Whangarei, NZ

Murray is a sculptor who has lectured in Australia and currently at Northland Polytech in Visual Arts.

His art practice explores the memory of place and the relationship between the natural and manmade landscapes.

### **Guiney Sue**

Dip Tchng (ECE), Kindergarten teacher, Whangarei, NZ

Sue is a qualified kindergarten teacher who was recently awarded the Kauri Scholarship, where she visited Mindstretchers in Scotland.

**Gentry Anna,**

NaturePlay NZ, Dip Tich, Bed, ECE facilitator, Environmental educator, NZ

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: NaturePlay NZ

**Greenfield Cheryl**

Programme Leader of the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), NZ

Cheryl Greenfield is Programme Leader of the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) at Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT).

Cheryl's research has included children's intersubjectivity and children's perceptions of outdoor play. She has completed her Masters of Education thesis on children's and adults' perceptions on being outside.

Cheryl is widely published on a range of subjects including the outdoors and has presented her research internationally. She is a strong advocate for children's right to freely access optimal early childhood outdoor environment; setting up and coordinating an Outdoor Reference Group for five years. This group has engaged in a range of projects to promote optimal outdoor spaces/ places.

**Holtom Jonny,**

Early Childhood Educator, Childspace, Wellington, NZ

My name is Jonny Holtom and my involvement in Early Childhood Education began when I joined the Childspace team 3 ½ years ago. I have been lucky enough to have engaged many aspects of the profession from teaching to environment design to a fusion of both. I have become a regular contributor to the ECE publication Space Magazine which provides a wider forum in which to communicate my experiences and passion for strengthening children's relationships with the natural world

**Mate Poa & Aggie Wynyard**

Mokopuna o Moerewa Early Childhood Education and Care Centre Moerewa NZ

The nurture of children has traditionally been the responsibility of women. This Nikau workshop allows you to explore the similarities of how this rakau Atawhai (nurture) it's young to blossom like our tamariki/Mokopuna. There are many uses that the Nikau can be used within our Kohungahunga

**Murphy Anna**

Eco Solutions, Whangarei, NZ

Anna teach's environmental education in schools with a focus on waste minimisation at home and at school. Our programme aims to promote sustainable living by teaching about reduce, reuse, recycle and composting.

**Oltman Marcie**

an Early Childhood Nature Education Specialist from Minneapolis, 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, and MS in Environmental Education and is a state certified early childhood educator with an M. Ed in Early Childhood Education.

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... 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.

### **Open Spaces Staff,**

Senior Educators at Open Spaces Preschool, NZ  
Open Spaces Preschool Academy - Glenbervie

### **Petrenko Linda,**

Dip Tch ECE, BED., NZ

Owner and team leader at Small Kauri Early Childhood Education Centre, Mangere Bridge Manukau.  
Linda began her teaching at Mount Albert Kindergarten in Auckland City in 1975, which was in an historic building located within a public park. This build on her love of the outdoors, allowing for the keeping of ducks, chooks, rabbits, guinea pigs and a lamb.  
Linda has been in education for 30 something years, involving lecturing, playcentre, kindergartens and all day centres.

### **Simperingham Genevieve,**

Peaceful Parenting Institute, NZ  
Peaceful Parenting

### **Sunlight Mandy,**

Tutor in flax weaving, a tikanga (protocols) Maori perspective at maraes, NZ

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.

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### **Annemarie Zwack,**

Visual Artist, ZwackArt, Spencer NY, USA

Annemarie Zwack is a visual artist who works in a variety of media. She also works extensively in schools with a variety of age groups. Projects range from papermaking, bookmaking, drawing, sculpting with clay, mural painting, mosaics, to quilting. She also works with natural materials such as sculpting with cob, and making fairy huts. Her goals are to help children and adults express themselves through art. She believes all people possess artistic creativity and works to help groups tap into it. She lives in the countryside of upstate NY, USA. When not working on art, you'll likely find Zwack collaborating with her husband on their garden, talking to her chickens, or if the moon is full, enjoying a sauna with friends.

Find examples of her work at [www.ZwackArt.com](http://www.ZwackArt.com) or on her blog [ZwackArt.blogspot.com](http://ZwackArt.blogspot.com)

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