

New LaL team members

Alani was born and raised in Baldivis. She attended Baldivis Primary school before going to Frederick Irwin Anglican School in Mandurah.

Since leaving high school Alani has attained several qualifications in the fields of Land Management and Tourism, but it was her love for working with children that drew her back into the school yard. For the past five years Alani has been working at several schools in the Peel region in Mainstream and Special Needs.

Alani has worked with children of all ages starting from three right through to twelve year olds. This is where she gained her valuable training, knowledge, skills and experience in oral language and articulation impairments.

Alani has helped create, co ordinate and implement several oral language and articulation programs focusing on early intervention within the school environment. But it wasn't just the students that Alani worked with, "I helped facilitate information sessions for parents, giving them ideas and arming them with the confidence and ways at which they could help their own child at home in the area of oral language."

Alani feels that her new job here at LaL couldn't have been more perfect for her. "Having the opportunity to work with children in a language focused environment and being given the opportunity to travel around rural WA is just a dream come true. I couldn't think of a better job I would rather be doing."

Alani feels privileged to be working with the LaL study and at the Institute and is finding her position both exciting and challenging. She is looking forward to traveling in rural WA. "I can't wait to get out into rural WA and meet the families. I am really looking forward to it." Alani's father lives in Salmon Gums near Esperance so she is used to the traveling and loves the country.

Alani has a seven year old daughter named Kaitlin who keeps her busy on the weekends and after work. They live on ten acres in Mardella and have many animals including dogs, cats, birds horses and a rabbit. The newest addition to the family is a miniature pony named Coco.



Lucy was in the beautiful, sunny town of Broome when she first heard about the opportunity to work as part of the LOOKING at Language team.

Prior to her travels in northern WA and the 'top end' she was living and working in a remote Aboriginal community in Central Australia. She says "this experience was both highly rewarding and life affirming". Her role within the community was largely in an educational capacity and as a mentor for the primary aged children.

Whilst in Central Australia Lucy gained a great appreciation for the difficulties and intricacies of language; she initially taught in English but in turn took instruction from her students on the local language, Warlpiri. With classes often conducted in a combination of both Warlpiri and English she had to quickly learn how to slip between the two languages so as to maximise the attention of her students.

Having completed a Health Science and Commerce degree at UWA in 2005 she realised that the LaL project was an ideal means of tying together her studies in health and the enjoyment she finds from working with children.

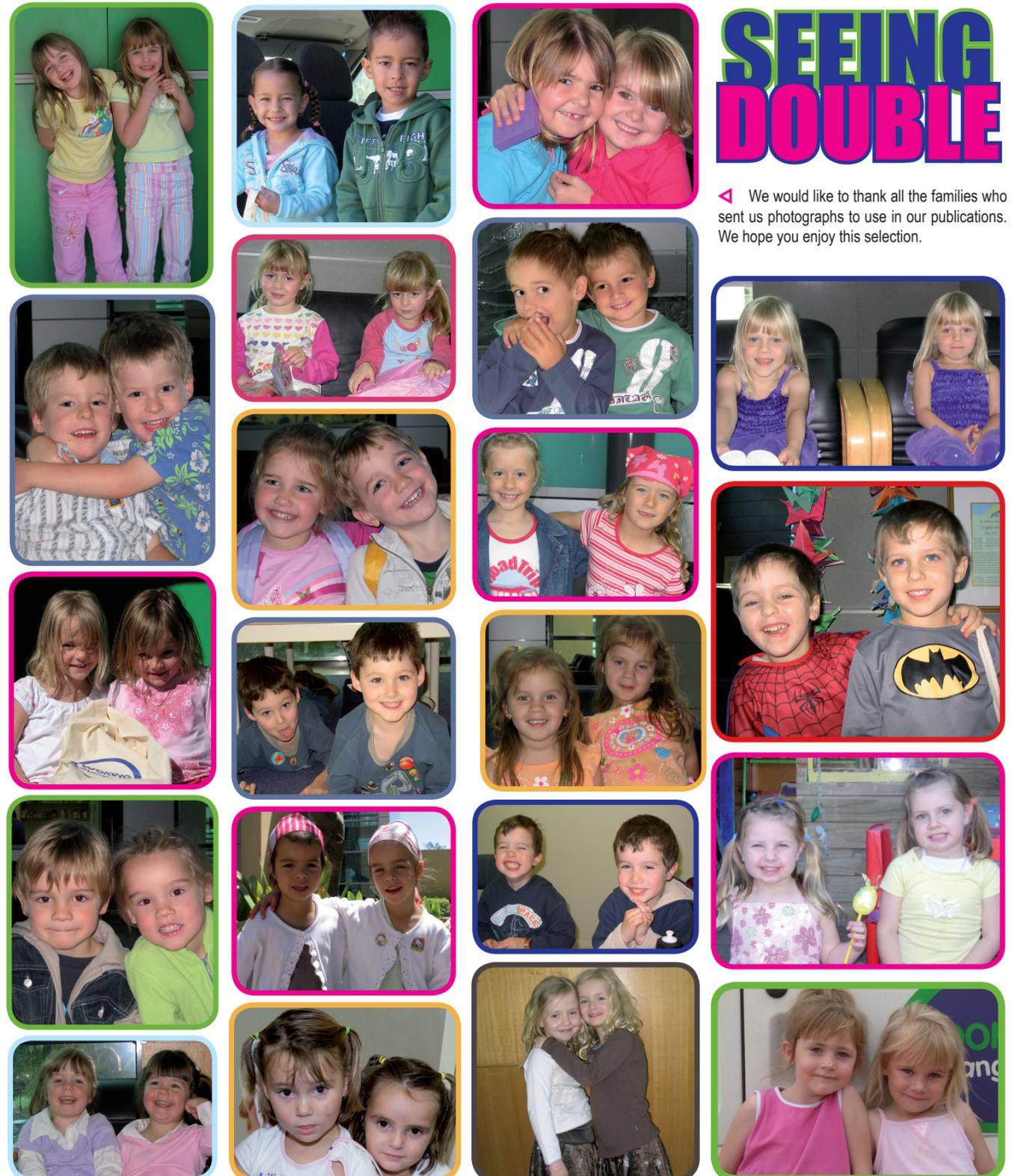
She says she "feel(s) proud to be part of such an important study that will impact on one of the most integral facets of life – language, and in turn communication. Language is a fundamental medium of expression and it can affect many different areas of life".

Lucy looks forward to meeting the LaL study families throughout Western Australia.

LOOKING at Language is grateful for the support of the following organisations:



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SEEING DOUBLE

◀ We would like to thank all the families who sent us photographs to use in our publications. We hope you enjoy this selection.

FirstWord LOOKING at Language

If you have any queries about any of the material published in *First Word* please contact:

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LaL STUDY Update

There are now around 1000 families taking part in the LOOKING at Language Study.

So far the study has completed 1738 assessments with study children. We have also completed 496 assessments with family members.

We would like to say a big THANK YOU to all LaL families for their fantastic support of our Study.

A message from Antonietta,

"It's never too late to return your questionnaires, and please let me know if your contact details change, please phone 08 9489 7917"



South-west families & friends

Twins and single-born children living in the south-west will be the talk of the town in June when they take part in a major study of children's language development.

LOOKING at Language examiners Alani Pike and Lucy Giggs will be visiting Busselton, Margaret River, Cowaramup and Capel during late May and June to meet with 46 South-West families taking part in the study. The trip has been made possible thanks to a donation of more than \$12,000 from the Margaret River Friends of the Institute.

Margaret River Friends Secretary Jan Smith said the group was very pleased to assist with the study coming to the area.

"We think it's really important that families in the South-West can be part of such an important international study and that the information that is gathered is representative of children from both metro and regional areas," Mrs Smith said.

"We get great support from the community for our fundraising, it's great to be able to show them how the money is spent in supporting the Institute's work."

More than 200 families throughout regional Western Australia are taking part in the study. In 2005, Busselton twins, Asha and Justin travelled to Perth to have their first assessment at the Institute. However, with the team travelling to the South-West, the twins were able to have their latest assessments at their home. Their mum, Lynda said that having the team visit their home was very convenient and gave the family greater flexibility.

"Having the team come to our home meant that our routine wasn't disrupted at all," Lynda said, "we didn't have to make other arrangements for our other daughter, we could go on with our day as usual."



Asha, Justin and their family have been a part of LaL four years, Lynda explains, "it is really important to be involved in a study like this, especially where twin numbers are limited, not only is it necessary, its a privilege."



▲ (L-R) Lucy, Asha, Justin and Alani

Principal Investigator Associate Professor Kate Taylor said the families taking part in LOOKING at Language are a precious resource who are making a big contribution to our understanding of factors that influence language development and language impairment in children.

"Language impairment is a serious developmental health problem that has long-term consequences for academic success, social and emotional development and adult employment opportunities," Professor Taylor said.

"Twins are helping us understand the role of genes and the environment in how language develops over time. An important aim of our study is to help explain why some children have language disorders. We hope to identify risk factors that will help us to identify children who may require help with language development and later with reading."

"We are tracking over 700 twin pairs from the onset of language to the early years of school."

"Unfortunately, there is no funding available for our research assistants to travel to rural WA, so this donation from the Margaret River Friends of the Institute is really important as it will greatly increase the study's capacity to identify important influences on children's language and reading abilities."

Rural twins visit Perth

Families with twins living in regional areas of Western Australia are taking the opportunity to travel to Perth as part of their LOOKING at Language experience. LaL now provides accommodation for families with twins who choose to travel to Perth for their assessments with our new partner - the Mont Clare Boutique Apartments.

Kelly and Vaughan decided to take time out from their busy farm commitments in Corrigin to take us up on the offer and book their four year old twins, Brooke and Rose for assessments at the Institute.

Kelly said it was a great opportunity to not only bring the family to Perth, but they were also able visit her mum for Mother's Day.

"We stopped in to visit mum on the way, and we also got the chance to see my sister who we normally only see three or four times over the year," Kelly said.

"We really enjoyed our stay at the Mont Clare, it's in a great location and we were able to make appointments in the city, as well as doing some shopping," she said. "We were also able to travel around using with the Cat bus - we were even able to use it to get to the Institute."

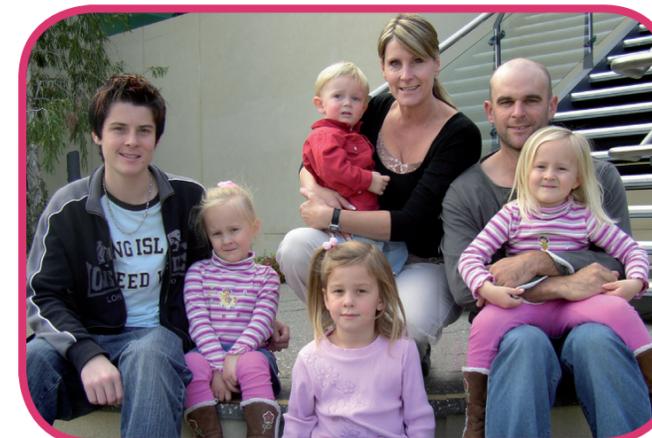


▲ (L-R) Kelly, Vaughan with Rose and Brooke.

Jacqui and David travelled to Perth from Pemberton with their 4 year old twins, Alia and Adele, and their other children Elle (5yrs) and Rowan (18months). David said that after working hard to set up their business 'Rock-It Landscapes', as well as finish landscaping their own home, the LOOKING at Language opportunity seemed like a 'good excuse for a family holiday'.

"We have been really busy renovating our home so it's been great to get the chance to come to Perth and pick up a few bits and pieces," David said, "and the Mont Clare Apartments are really nice, we looked them up on the internet and thought it was a good opportunity to have a family holiday."

"But that's just a bonus because we really enjoy being part of the Study, it is really good to be involved with things like this," he said.



▲ (L-R) Daniel, Alia, (back) Rohan with mum Jacqui, Adele with dad David, and Elle (front).

Located in East Perth, the Mont Clare Boutique Apartments offer a variety of spacious apartments each elegantly furnished and featuring a fully equipped kitchen, separate living/dining area and its own laundry. The Mont Clare Boutique Apartments also offers its guests an outdoor, 15 metre swimming pool, gymnasium and complimentary secure car parking.

If you would like to find out more about the accommodation offer at the Mont Clare Boutique Apartments, please contact Antonietta on 9489 7767, or antoniettai@icmr.uwa.edu.au by email.



THANKS Julian (aged 9) from Boyonup for this great picture!!

We would love to receive more artwork, photos, stories from our LaL study children.

If you have something you would like to send in to the Study for us to display at the Institute, or publish in our next newsletter, please send it in to :

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