



Robbeburg Newsletter



Robbeburg International Playgroup
www.robbeburg.com

May 2010

Introduction

It's been a long cold winter but finally the seasons are changing. The clocks have gone forward and the lighter evenings are making us feel as if we have more time. And guess what? We DO have more time! Add up all the minutes we used to spend in the day looking for hats, scarves, gloves, coats and boots and then the additional minutes spent coaxing reluctant babies and toddlers into them. Add up all the time spent wiping runny noses and going to the doctor and then staying home with sick kids. And then think about the fact that we don't have to do that all summer long!!! That should save at least half an hour a week. Make sure you do something fun with it!

Robbeburg News

Committee and Groups:

There have been a lot of changes to the committee recently. Both of our very artistic Co-Chairs, Laura and Rachael, are standing down (the murals and posters and displays will suffer!). However, Vikki Walker is taking over from Rachael with immediate effect, in addition to her role as Party Booker. A big thank you to Vikki from all Robbeburg members, for those who don't already know her, you can "meet" her via her profile below. Laura will stay on as Co-Chair until another volunteer comes forward, please email her at committee@robbeburg.com if you are interested in taking on this or any of the following roles for Robbeburg:

- **Special events Co-ordinator** - everyone loves a party, you just have to pick a day and practise delegating! Thank you to Erika for the professional way in which she has handled this role over the past couple of years.
- **Fundraising**

Don't forget, there are benefits to all these jobs over and above serving Robbeburg! As a Committee member you are entitled to one free party at Robbeburg or free bouncy castle rental per year and the Committee is currently considering extending this to Group Leaders too.

Thursday group now has new Group Leaders.

The last committee meeting was on March 9th. It was suggested that a section should be added to the Membership form asking people if they have any special skills or interests that could help Robbeburg, for example, Publishing/ PR/ artistic ability etc. As an existing member reading this newsletter, please also feel free to volunteer this kind of help if you can (committee@robbeburg.com) The next Committee meeting will be advertised on the website and on posters at Robbeburg and all members are cordially invited to attend.

Other:

Vikki would like to remind people holding parties at Robbeburg to leave the place as clean and tidy as

they would like to find it. Also, at the end of each session, please could you make sure you have done the following, in order to deter the mice:

- Vacuumed everywhere, including the mats and under the big cushions in the 'baby' section
- Wiped down the highchairs
- Emptied the bin
- Put away tables and chairs

We are running low on tea towels again, if you have any Robbeburg tea towels at home please turn them in!

New advertising flyers have been printed. Please take a handful from the shelf under the telephone and distribute them to your friends, relatives or colleagues or anywhere else where expats seeking distraction for their small children are to be found.

Events:

We hope to organise a Bring and Buy BBQ fundraiser in the summer. Look out for posters with the details.

Personal Profiles

Please see below for an insight into one of our most dedicated Committee members and Group Leaders, **Vikki Walker**:

PROFILE:



Children: Anabelle (Belle), 20 months

Nationality: British

Robbeburg involvement: A member for about 16 months. Monday AM/Thursday PM group leader, Party Booker, Secretary and now Co-Chair.

Time in The Netherlands? 4.5 years

How's your Dutch?...! Non existent!!

THE KID(S):

MOST-LOVED household item that makes life easier with kids: The crafty things we have, Belle loves painting/colouring etc

Number 1 tip for travelling with kids: Still trying to figure that one out!!!!

Feeding the kids: We're really lucky and Belle will eat pretty much everything!

Children's favourite books: Noddy's Busy Taxi Playbook.

Favourite things to do with kids in Amsterdam: Children's farms, Tunfun, Zoo, Vondelpark..lots!

ME:

Life before kids: Office supervisor. Voluntary work here at Access before Belle was born.

Hobbies and interests: Reading

Reading: No actual books, just mags at present!

Listening to: In The Night Garden!

Last film I say: Avatar

Ideal child-free dream holiday destination:

Awww, I don't have one, Belle would be with us!!

Essential handbag item/s: I have most things in my handbag!!

AMSTERDAM:

Loves: The fact you can walk anywhere and it's pretty child friendly!

Hates: The lunatic drivers and sorry if I offend....cyclists that insist on using the pavement!!!!!!

Misses about home: My family

AND FINALLY:

Heineken or Amstel? Heineken

Salt and vinegar or Cheese and Onion? Salt and Vinegar - so wish they'd change the colour of the packet for their Bolognese flavour...forever thinking that's S&V!!!

Day and Weekend Excursions

The Easter weekend saw the beginning of the season for a lot of open air attractions around the Netherlands. Here are a few suggestions for those spring and summer days.

<p>There are several museums which offer an insight into the social history of the Netherlands, via beautifully preserved collections of old farmhouses, windmills, shops, schools, factories etc set in open parkland:</p> <p>Zuider Zee museum, Enkhuizen www.zuiderzee.nl (for insider info, contact Marian Francken from Wed group whose husband works here!)</p>	
<p>Openlucht museum, Arnhem www.openluchtmuseum.nl (fab playground and authentic old trams to take you around the park)</p>	
<p>Zaans Schans www.zaanseschans.nl (less than half an hour by car from Amsterdam)</p>	
<p>Linnaeushof - "Europe's Biggest Playground" www.linnaeushof.nl</p>	<p>Slides, trains, trampolines, water fun, a whole area for toddlers but the entrance fee is steep.</p>
<p>Keukenhof - Holland wouldn't be Holland without tulips www.keukenhof.nl</p>	
<p>Efteling www.efteling.com Albert Heijn is giving you money off the entrance price if you collect stickers from them. 20 three-dimensional, educational play areas especially designed for toddlers</p>	

A relaxing day at the office!

Recently I've been receiving a lot of requests from people wanting to connect with me on Linked In (a sort of business Facebook). So I unearthed my CV from the depths of my computer's filing system in order to update it and post it on the site. And it occurred to me that what it really needs isn't an update but a fundamental rearrangement. At the moment it looks something like this:

Name and contact details

Employment history over the last 15 years peppered with bullet points in corporate waffle-speak, all meant to highlight my superb efficiency, responsibility, expertise in meeting deadlines, ability to lead and motivate a team, focus, innovate etc

And then tucked away at the end of the third page, in a little section called Other:

"Aug 2007 - Jun 2008 and Mar 2009 - Dec 2009: On Maternity Leave"

What is this doing at the bottom when it should be right up at the beginning, directly below my name? Firstly because, no matter how exciting a job, the kids are always going to be more important. Leaving on time to collect them, taking them to the doctor and the Consultatie Bureau is going to take precedence over deadlines and a potential employer needs to be comfortable with that straight away or there's no point in interviewing me. But, more importantly, caring for small children is **fantastic** CV material. Talk about multi tasking and the ability to get things done under pressure! It is far easier to derive concrete examples of efficiency and innovation from my time as a mother than from my collective work experience. Here are some examples:

What it says on my CV	What this means in the office	What this means in the real world
Ability to meet deadlines	Sometime next year we will be launching a new product. Before then we will have lots of coffee and meetings and the deadline will get postponed 3 times so it's not that difficult to deliver my tiny part of the whole on time.	Minimum of three absolutely critical deadlines per day: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner. Failing to plan for and meet these leads to absolute melt down and inability for the team to function at all. Assistance from the other team leader (Daddy) may be forthcoming but is often comes in five minutes before deadline and is limited to "I'll make dinner. What are they having and how much do they eat?"
Ability to perform under pressure	Nasty boss making demands at the last minute. Easily dealt with by coffee machine whinge with sympathetic colleagues in the same boat	Consultatie Bureau appointment at 10am. It's 9.30am and Child 1 has emptied your handbag all over the floor, posted your keys out of the letterbox and hidden your shoes whilst Child 2 has pooped up its own back necessitating a complete outfit change. You arrive on time for your appointment with two clean happy children. And your shoes.
Demonstrates responsibility and commitment	Doing what you say you're going to do. Important but nebulous and hard to define.	One or more tiny people depend on you for survival. You've committed to them for the next 18 years and every second you spend with them requires a hyper alert responsibility to keep them safe
Training/leading/motivating a team	The company is outsourcing a function and you need to detail every step of every process so it can be followed by the new team, who have no idea of the big picture and couldn't care less about the consequences of missing one of the steps.	Reminding your toddler to sit on the potty when he or she needs to wee is useless if you have forgotten to explain about taking pants and trousers down first. And even more useless if you haven't first negotiated and agreed the reward structure.

Every day with a baby necessitates learning quickly, pro-actively and on the job. Every day with a

toddler, especially rainy days, requires innovation and flexibility. Every day with a small child involves negotiation and the distillation of complex ideas into something they can understand. Working versus stay at home mummies is an emotive issue which should only be decided by each individual family, within their respective circumstances. Of course, there probably are super mummies who think running a home and kids is easy and there are definitely people with a lot more demanding jobs than mine, but the more I think about my typical day at the office compared to my average day with the kids, the more convinced I am about the CV re-write. Kids are hard work, there are no statutory lunch breaks and no maximum working hours. Here's what I do on work days:

Arrive at office between 9 and 9.30, check emails, catch up with the news on the internet, chat to a few colleagues, maybe join them for coffee. Concentrate **properly** for a few hours on work, have lunch with colleagues during which no one spills water, throws an unexpected tantrum or needs my help to get rice on a spoon. Another cup of coffee, a couple of interesting meetings, a phone interview with a customer then home on the bus, during which I actually have time to read my book or call my friends.

Listing what I do on childcare days would take far too much space and you know it all already. So I'll be connecting with you all on Linked In soon!

Committee and Contact Details

Co Chair	Vikki Walker	co-chair@robbeburg.com
Co Chair	Laura Amiss	co-chair@robbeburg.com
Treasurer	Rebecca Moss	treasurer@robbeburg.com
Secretary and Party Booker	Vikki Walker	partybookings@robbeburg.com
Purchasing and Facilities	Melissa Lennon	purchaser@robbeburg.com
Membership	Lisa Boyle	lisa.boyle@chello.nl
Webmaster	Daniela Gfeller	webmaster@robbeburg.com
Publicity	Billy Dhadwal	billy_gd@hotmail.com
Events Co-ordinator	Erika Reiter	e_reiter21@yahoo.ca
Newsletter Editor	Rosalind Arwas	Robbeburg_newsletter@hotmail.com
Fundraising	Vacancy	

Advertisements

ROBBEBURG BOUNCY CASTLE:

- Available to rent for parties (Robbeburg members only)
 - EUR35
 - Easy to inflate and deflate
 - Can be used indoors or out
 - Approx 2m x 2m jumping space
 - Kids love it!
- Contact Jennifer Bridle for further information on partybookings@robbeburg.com

