

## **Margaret May Blackwell Travel Fellowship: Information sheet**

### **Introduction**

1. The Margaret May Blackwell Travel Fellowship was initiated in 1988 and is administered by NZCER on behalf of the trustees. In 2015 the administration of the funds was taken over by the Remuera Rotary Club Charitable Trust.
2. The fellowship is named after Margaret May Blackwell, who was closely involved in the education and welfare of young children both in New Zealand and overseas. She was a Karitane nurse, a District Commissioner in Girl Guides, a student of early childhood education under Susan Isaacs, an escort for refugee children in the Spanish Civil War, a student of early childhood at Toronto and Columbia Universities, a child psychologist at Auckland Hospital, an advocate of finger-painting therapy, and a participant in Lifeline and the Inter-church Counselling Centre.
3. The fellowship is given annually to enable a suitable person working in early childhood education to study overseas to gain further experience and subsequently to disseminate that information for the benefit of early childhood education in New Zealand.
4. The award is for a period of up to three months but for not less than six weeks. The award is for up to \$16,000 and is for travel and accommodation. It is not intended to pay a salary. The travel should be completed in the calendar year in which the fellowship is held.
5. The Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education have recognised the Margaret May Blackwell Travel Study Fellowship for Early Childhood Education as a prestigious award. Such recognition enables recipients to be eligible for leave with pay, subject to the approval of their employing authority.

### **Purpose**

7. The purposes for which the travel study fellowship is offered are to:
  - a) Preserve the memory of Margaret May Blackwell as an early childhood educator of note;
  - b) Promote ongoing study and research of the development, practice, organisation, and philosophy of early childhood education;
  - c) Provide opportunity to study in other countries, those early childhood education areas of interest having relevance, national significance and benefit to New Zealand; and to
  - d) Permit persons of calibre and expertise in the area of early childhood education to have the opportunity to travel and to study overseas.

### **Eligibility**

8. Persons eligible to be considered for the travel study fellowship are current practitioners in the broad field of early childhood education in New Zealand:
  - a) Teachers, supervisors and workers from all parts of the early childhood education sector.
  - b) Lecturers in appropriate disciplines in tertiary institutions.
  - c) Ministry of Education personnel, and those in an education agency, working in early childhood education.

### **Selection of study topic and country**

9. NZCER may decide to invite applications in specific areas of study or have an open application process.

### **Selection process**

10. On receipt of all applications, NZCER will convene a selection panel of at least two representatives from the early childhood education sector, along with an NZCER representative. The trustees will be informed of the selection prior to it being made public.

### **Criteria for selection**

11. The criteria for selection will include:
  - a) Extent to which the area of interest is relevant to early childhood education in New Zealand. The applicant needs to provide a clear rationale for the choice of topic and country.
  - b) Extent to which the activities to be undertaken while overseas are worthwhile and relevant.
  - c) Potential for benefit to the early childhood education sector in New Zealand, including quality of plans for dissemination.
  - d) Applicant has relevant experience in the topic area and demonstrated ability to gain professional benefit from the fellowship.

### **Fellowship report**

12. As a condition of acceptance of the fellowship, each recipient will be required to provide NZCER with a short report of the activities undertaken, within three months of completion of the award.
13. There will also be the expectation that the recipient would engage in other forms of dissemination such as reporting to the media, speaking to others in the early childhood education sector or writing a blog.

### **Costings**

14. The grant will be paid to the recipient in two stages, one half (\$8,000) up to one month ahead of the planned travel and the rest on its completion once receipts are provided. The recipient is expected to provide receipts for all travel and accommodation. NZCER will pay the full \$16,000 providing the costs can be accounted for by the recipient. Any amount that is not paid to the recipient in one year will be reinvested into the fund.
15. The recipient is expected to live off her/his own wage/salary.
16. The award is a prestigious one, and it is suggested that employing authorities should grant leave on pay. The Ministry of Education has the capacity to approve leave on full pay for persons directly under its supervision. Employing authorities have the right to deny release for leave purposes to their employees.

## **Margaret May Blackwell**

Margaret Blackwell was born in Kaiapoi in 1907, where she had her early education at the Kaiapoi Borough School. After a year at Christchurch Girls' High School, she completed her secondary education at Columba College in Dunedin. Later in Dunedin she trained and qualified as a Karitane Nurse. Returning to Kaiapoi she was active in the Girl Guide Association becoming District Commissioner. She was also a keen sportswoman, particularly in tennis and in golf.

In the mid 1930's Margaret Blackwell travelled to England and in London studied Pre School Education under the direction of Susan Isaacs, who at that time was a leader in the area of Pre School Education. Prior to World War 2, 1939-1945, Margaret Blackwell travelled throughout Europe. During the Spanish Civil War, she helped escort refugee children to England. Her concern for the safety of children and moving them from war zones was shown again when after the declaration of war in 1939 she helped escort a large group of children by ship from England to Canada. During the period of the Second World War she remained in North America for about five years furthering her experiences and training in early childhood education at both the Toronto University in Canada, and at Columbia University in New York.

On her return to New Zealand after the Second World War, she settled in Auckland where she worked as a child psychologist at the Auckland Hospital for many years. She was an early advocate of parents staying with their young children during periods of hospitalisation. She was also an early advocate of finger painting as good therapy for children. During this time, she also became very involved with the Inter-Church Counselling Centre, with the Telephone Life Line Service, and with the Friends of the Service whose purpose was to raise funds.

Whilst travelling in the Pacific region Margaret Blackwell died in Sacramento, California in 1980 after a period of hospitalisation in San Francisco and Sacramento.