

OSCAR, CODY & HAIRY MACCLARY

A STORY OF BEING A CARING FRIEND AND THE LOVE OF A GOOD BOOK!

Helen, June 2016

This afternoon, a child came to tell me that I was needed outside. Upon investigating, I came upon Cody looking sad at the gate, and Oscar with a protective arm lightly on Cody's shoulder, waiting with him. Oscar explained to me that Cody was missing his Grandma. He watched me as I spoke with Cody and after I invited Cody inside to read a book with me, Oscar decided that he would come too. So before long the three of us were nestled on the couch with the book *Hairy MacClary* in hand.



Both Oscar and Cody were clearly familiar and attached to this story as they predicted the storyline and anticipated the rhyme within the text. As we read each page, our conversation went off track and we began talking about all kinds of other semi-related things: the numbers on the various dogs' letterboxes; what numbers are on our own letterboxes; our address's (the names of our streets and suburbs); our houses; and our pet cats and dogs. Cody told me about his black and white cat Manu, and Oscar shared stories of his beloved puppy Dotti. There was a funny little misunderstanding of meaning at one point as Oscar told us that the number on his letterbox was one seven". " Oh number 17" I said. "No!" Oscar laughed, "(only) one 7" (meaning seven!). "Ohh I see!". We had a good laugh about that one!

This account was about two things for me. Firstly, The way this encounter with Cody highlights the genuine and warm way in which Oscar relates to other children at Kindergarten (and adults too for that matter) – he regularly showed compassion and manaaki (care) for others, and in this moment was a true friend to Cody, helping him to feel better through genuine enjoyment and shared interest in a story – it was a very special thing to witness. Secondly, isn't it amazing what learning and relationship connections can happen through conversation and reading of a good book? (Mathematics, knowledge of each other, animals, Geography etc). And of course, this one, like many favourites, had a happy ending for all!

