

## RYDE

## Dedication to teaching has its own rewards

Scott Howlett

TWO preschool teachers who have been the heart and soul of The Children's House Montessori School in Ryde for two-thirds of its life have been recognised for their dedicated service.

Principal Denise Underwood and morning class directress Chandani Gunaratne celebrated their 10-year anniversaries at the preschool on Cressy Rd, Ryde, on Friday afternoon.

Mrs Underwood and Mrs Gunaratne have guided and taught more than 200 toddlers in the past decade.

The Montessori approach allows each child to develop at their own pace and encourages independent thinking.

Mrs Underwood, 57, of Marsfield, said the profound sense of community at the school had made the past 10 years so enjoyable.

"As it is a Montessori school, the children stay with me for three years and



Principal Denise Underwood and class directress Chandani Gunaratne with John Alexander.

Picture: CARMELLA ROCHE

that way I can see them develop from the ages of three to six until they are ready to go to big school," said Mrs Underwood, a teacher for 20 years.

"I am humbled by the support from the community and I am extremely proud to celebrate this milestone, especially alongside my colleague and friend, Chandani."

Mrs Gunaratne, 54, of Cherrybrook, said: "The thing I like about Montessori best is the sense of belonging we have here.

"It's like a close-knit family, and the last 10 years have been an absolute pleasure."

Bennelong federal Liberal MP John Alexander thanked the pair at the school on Friday afternoon.