



AMSSA Report April 2018

Welcome to the first AMSSA Newsletter for 2018. I particularly welcome the new staff and students who have joined our Mercy schools across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. There are a number of new principals who have taken up leadership positions in Mercy schools. I welcome: Jennifer Oaten., Santa Maria College Attadale, Judith Weir, OLMC Heidelberg, Ann Freeman, OLMC Burraneer, Steve Bryan, St Catherine's College Wellington, Peter Meers, James Sheahan Catholic High School Orange, Steve Muller, MacKillop College Bathurst, Catherine Galvin, St John Fisher College, Bracken Ridge.

The planning for the next **Mercy Student Conference which will be held in Perth from September 22 – 26, 2018** is well underway. The Registration Brochure will be available very shortly. I encourage all schools to send students to the Conference. The feedback from the previous conferences we have held has been very positive.

The AMSSA Executive met in Adelaide at the end of February to review the Action Plan that was developed in 2016 and to plan for the next two years. At the meeting we welcomed Deb Carter from Frayne work to discuss a new project to develop Mercy resources for schools which was proposed at and agreed to at the Biennial General Meeting during the Mercy Staff Conference in August 2017.

At the end of 2017, Gilda Pussich from OLMC Burraneer resigned from the AMSSA Executive because she was taking up a new position at another school. After nominations were called for from NSW schools, Teash Richmond from Catherine McAuley High School, Westmead was elected to the Executive representing NSW. On behalf of all involved in AMSSA, I would like to thank Gilda for her support of and commitment to AMSSA since 2013, in particular her leadership role in planning and organising the Mercy Student Conference in Sydney in 2016.

I would like to thank the many schools who have contributed articles and photos to this Newsletter. There is a great representation of schools across Australia and New Zealand. I trust you enjoy reading about the great things that are happening in Mercy schools.

Kitty Guerin
AMSSA Executive Officer

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Be Peaceful; Act With Integrity

In reflecting on Pope Francis' words that, "the Church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel" (Evangelii Gaudium 114), it is encouraging to see the many ways the All Hallows' staff and students encounter God's Mercy in our School everyday. We are indeed blessed to be part of a community so willing to be of service to others in the spirit of Mercy.



The All Hallows' Community encounters God's Mercy in myriad ways: through prayer, through service and through living full communal lives. The Seniors of 2017 helped facilitate a visual reminder of our Mercy values in the donation of plaques which have been placed prominently on the terrace deck. The values of Compassion, Respect, Joy, Service,

Integrity and Justice are a constant reminder that we have received God's grace and that it is our responsibility to respond accordingly. One of these values has been incorporated into the School's theme for the year: Be Peaceful; Act With Integrity. This theme acts as an invitation to be counter-cultural in a world consumed by violence and narcissism. They are a reminder that we are "called to have hearts of love".



All Hallows' School's Mercy Action program continues to grow to meet the needs of the local community as well as the ever-increasing demand by our students for opportunities to put our values into action. The year began with the launch of our whole school project, Yumba Connect. Each year the All Hallows' Community focuses its fundraising efforts on a particular project and this year we have a local

emphasis. The Social Justice Captains were very excited to launch the 2018 Whole School Project at our opening assembly. The project supports two local Indigenous programs: West End Community House which holds 'Connection to Culture' events to encourage participants who are experiencing social isolation and mental health issues to explore their social connectedness, and, Beemar Yumba (Beemar meaning children and Yumba, house/hut), which is a residential care house in Cherbourg supported by Mercy Community. We look forward to the creative ways in which our community responds to this project and embraces reconciliation opportunities as we engage with the local Indigenous people.

The growth of our Mercy Action program saw the inclusion of a reading mentoring program at St Joseph's Primary School, Kangaroo Point. This program allows for individual reading tuition to be provided to students in Year 2 by our girls and already, in its very first weeks, a strong relational trust has been established. It is through this relational trust that our works of Mercy allow us to become part of a "life-giving presence".

The season of Lent has been a particular focus this term. It has been a time of prayer and reflection but also a time to promote strong relationships within the community. The prayer life of the School has been developed through traditional means such as our Ash Wednesday house liturgies and morning prayer but we have also 'gone-digital' with weekly reflections made available on the digital screens around the School. Staff too have had the opportunity to gather in prayer in our weekly Lenten prayer group. For the students, the focus of Lent has been on the development of positive relationships. The student leaders established a theme for Lent: Create a New Heart; Make a New Friend. In the hope of strengthening the All Hallows' Sisterhood, lunchtime activities and assembly programs have supported the Lenten theme and the development of our Hearts of Mercy.

In a year when the All Hallows' community is invited to be peaceful and act with integrity, we can turn to the words of Pope Paul VI who expressed it so well: "If you want peace, work for justice." This is our mission for 2018; this is how we will encounter God's Mercy.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Starting the year on the right path

The Catholic special character at Marian College in Christchurch is a daily enrichment of activities and learning, inspired by two remarkable women of faith – our charism of Catherine McAuley and Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop.



Every school year, each year level experiences a two-day retreat designed to deepen students' understanding of the gospel message.

In early February, Year 13 Marian College students headed off to Wainui Park on Banks Peninsula for a leadership retreat themed *Spirituality and Creation*. It involved taking time to reflect on their own spirituality, on stewardship, creation and nature and experiencing stillness and creativity, personal care, a walk and coasteering.

Camps and liturgies also bring the spiritual into students' lives in meaningful ways.

This year, the Marian College student leadership team helped select the school scripture for 2018 which is: *Ka araneitokuwairuaki a koe e Ihowa* (Tereo Maori), *Lead me in the right path, O Lord*. PSALM 25:4A.

Marian College Head Girl Izzy Bloxham says her faith has grown over the years she has attended Marian College.

It is her hope for 2018 to lead and help her fellow students to grow in their faith and find God in those around them.

"My faith journey has developed enormously since arriving at Marian College and I have the staff and my peers to thank for that.

"I hope that as student leaders, we can guide, inspire and encourage every student to be involved and to give as much back as we can to our communities."

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Cambodia Service Trip

In December 2017, 12 Year 11 students from Mercedes College, Springfield were lucky enough to travel to Cambodia for 10 days. Through visiting schools, family villages and communities, we were able to immerse ourselves in the culture and witness the everyday lives of the Cambodian people.



We participated in many activities while we were there, including service work, building, community work, visiting schools, and learning about Cambodian history. Each of these individual experiences allowed us to truly appreciate the strength of Cambodian people and how lucky we were to have the opportunity to share their country, even for a short time.

Just as important as the physical service, the fundraising prior to the trip was vital. Several combined fundraisers allowed all Mercedes students to become involved. Service is a key aspect of the values we hold close at Mercedes College. Being an internationally minded school, the fundraising activities gave each of us the opportunity to see the positive difference we were making in the world.

Throughout our time based in Siem Reap we visited three local and regional schools. Despite the drastic differences in facilities and resources at each school, we were greeted with the same smiles from students wherever we went. Thanks to the efforts of the fundraising throughout the year, we were able to deliver sporting equipment and stationery to every school we visited, and help the young students put the balls, jump-ropes, and games to good use. The most rewarding experience was playing games, and despite the language barrier, being able to celebrate every achievement.

Roughly seven hours on a bumpy bus ride from Siem Reap is the region of Stung Treng where we built a house and toilet block for a disadvantaged family. Quickly learning brick laying and construction skills, we worked together to create a new family home. Although quite a physically demanding job, we thoroughly enjoyed the experience knowing the long lasting impacts we had for that village.

Before travelling to Phnom Penh, we also visited the Apopo Hero Rat Centre, where they train Tanzanian rats to locate landmines. This process is far more efficient and economical than other methods and the country aims to be landmine-free by 2020. Whilst at the centre we had the opportunity to sponsor a rat named Magawa for the following year.

The cultural immersion during the Cambodia Trip was an invaluable part of the experience, and helped us to understand the history and people of Cambodia. Just driving around Siem Reap on Tuk-Tuks was a completely new experience that demonstrated the ordered chaos of the city; constant horns, motorbikes weaving in and out of traffic, and the sound of city all around us. Before the trip we were given a brief overview of the history of Cambodia and how it became the country it is today; however, the impact the Pol Pot regime had on the country was not fully apparent to us until we were there. It was during our trips to the S-21 Genocide Museum, the Killing Fields and the International Court that we realised the true strength of Cambodia.

The 2017 Cambodia Service Trip was an incredible and eye-opening experience. The opportunity to fully immerse ourselves in a country as resilient, spirited and rich in culture as Cambodia made us appreciate the diversity of our world and instilled values of compassion and integrity. It reiterated our sense of gratitude and personal responsibility to promote justice to those in worse situations than us.

Mercy College Coburg is building relationships through intercultural dialogue and growing engagement (BRIDGE) School Partnerships Program

Mercy College has been selected for the Australia-Asia BRIDGE (Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement) School Partnerships Program. This program is facilitated by the Asia Education Foundation, a national not-for-profit initiative of Asialink at The University of Melbourne.



The aim of the program is to connect teachers, students and school communities across Australia and Asia, to increase awareness and understanding of contemporary Australia and Asia and build people-to-people links across the region.

Mercy College has been partnered with SMP Progresif Bumi Shalawat, a progressive junior high (Years 7 - 9) Islamic secondary school, located in Sidorajo, East Java.

To begin developing a strong partnership between our two schools, Mercy College has welcomed two teachers from SMP Progresif Bumi Shalawat. Mega Dwiantara, a Mathematics teacher, and Khalif Rahma Riesty Fauzi, an English teacher. They have observed classes, team-taught, and have begun developing a partnership with our school community. They have also collaborated with the nominated BRIDGE program leaders at Mercy College, to develop a project to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith awareness, as well as increasing Indonesian/English language proficiency at our respective schools.

Mercy College is looking forward to continuing to build and sustain a strong relationship with them once they have returned to Indonesia.



[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Didge players bound for games opening ceremony

The tyranny of distance could well have cruelled the opportunity of a lifetime for two Indigenous boys from Herberton to perform in the Opening Ceremony of the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in April.



However, the performance aspirations of the senior students from Mount St Bernard College have been thrown a lifeline by a friend and former colleague of Cairns Catholic Education.

To take part in the dream opportunity, Keane Ryan and Mathew Ederer, both 17, would be required to attend rehearsal sessions on the Gold Coast over a six-week period in the lead up to the April 4 event.

Such a long absence from their senior schooling would come at a damaging cost to their education, but now the boys will be able to attend school at St Edmund's College, Ipswich as well as realise their dream, thanks to Principal, Diarmuid O'Riordan and the St Edmund's College community.

Formerly the Deputy Executive Director of Catholic Education Services in Cairns, Diarmuid took up the position of Principal at St Edmund's last year to be closer to family. But his Far North Queensland Catholic Education family remains close to his heart.

In a typical display of cooperation and support between Catholic school communities regardless of where they are located, Diarmuid and Mount St Bernard College Principal, David Finch brokered an arrangement so that Keane and Mathew can continue their schooling at St Edmund's, around rehearsals. Although only at the school for some of their time away, both Principals view this as a tremendous opportunity to share cultures and open a dialogue between indigenous boarders at Mount St Bernard College and the students at St Edmund's College.

Mathew is a local Tablelands boy and Keane is from Santa Teresa in Central Australia. Both boys have been founding members of the Didge Kids and boarders at Mount St Bernard College since Year 8 and both are members of the College's student leadership group this year.

David, members of Mount St Bernard's Transition team and the St Edmund's College community are assisting with accommodation and chaperoning to make the opportunity a reality.

Keane and Mathew are very excited to have been selected for a role in the Opening Ceremony and grateful to those who are working hard behind the scenes to bring their dream to fruition.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

History Made as Two Ex-Students Awarded 2017 OLMC Alumnae Award

For the first time in the history of Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, two women have been awarded the annual **Catherine McAuley Alumnae Award**.



Jenny Da Rin and **Jacquie Scott** accepted their awards at a special College assembly on Tuesday February 20 in the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre. They delivered speeches to the students and staff present and participated in a short Q&A session, before being presented with their awards.

Jenny Da Rin (Class of 1981) is currently the Australian High Commissioner to the Republic of Vanuatu. She commenced her three-year term in January 2017 and manages Australia's diplomatic, trade and development cooperation activities. Jenny has recently been leading Australia's response to the volcanic eruption on Ambae Island, which has necessitated a full evacuation of the island and displacement of over 11,000 people.

Jacquie Scott (Class of 1975) is a registered nurse whose career in England led her to eventually become Chair of the RCN London Society of Orthopaedics. She has worked with the British Council and supported Palestinian nurses with orthopaedic developments in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. She was responsible for establishing the first Dip HE in Ortho and Trauma at Oxford University and also for setting up the first Bone Infection Unit in the UK. Jacquie has worked in a number of management roles in the NHS such as Director of Nursing, Director of Strategy and Planning and Chief Executive.

Principal Stephen Walsh said the winners were a testament to the quality of a Mercy Education at OLMC Parramatta: "Both women have pursued excellence in their own ways and are brilliant examples of living a life inspired by the Mercy Values and Sisters of Mercy Founder, Catherine McAuley!"

Jenny Da Rin said that she feels there were no glass ceilings at OLMC: "Women of vision like Catherine McAuley, and those who have come after her, are wonderful examples to us all of what one woman with guts and determination can do to change the lives of others. Their stories inspire us to contribute in our own way to make the world a better place. As OLMC prepares to celebrate its 130th anniversary, I am confident that it will continue to strive for excellence and to promote the values that have served us so well. These values have also shaped us and the way we see the world: they have guided me in my work as a diplomat and humanitarian. I am very proud to be an alumnus of OLMC – a Mercy Girl - and to walk in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley."

Jacque Scott recalled a strong culture of encouragement at OLMC: "I remember always being encouraged, despite your ability. We were all treated as equals. The school taught me to be kind, thoughtful and to respect everyone." Jacque shared some of her life lessons: "Aim to achieve your dreams. Live well – the things we don't do are what we often regret. Success does not come to you; you have to go and get it. If I am told that I cannot do something it makes me more determined to ensure I can: it's about building resilience."

OLMC Parramatta Alumnae President Christine Robertson said the 2017 Catherine McAuley Alumnae Award celebrates two women who have lived the Mercy tradition through service, stewardship, compassion and excellence: "Both women have utilised their fields of employment to develop new programs to empower others."

Introduced in 2009, the **Catherine McAuley OLMC Parramatta Alumnae Award** celebrates and acknowledges the great achievements of the OLMC Alumnae community. Nominees are chosen based on a number of criteria such as commitment to social justice activities, personal, academic and professional achievement, leadership, innovation and creativity, community involvement and contribution to Mercy/Christian based activities. Catherine McAuley was the Irish founder of the Sisters of Mercy.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

OLMC Parramatta Introduces Four New Houses in 2018

In 2018, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta will introduce four new Houses as part of a move to the Vertical House Pastoral Care System.



College Principal Stephen Walsh says this is a momentous occasion in the College's long history as it is the first time in 25 years that a new House has been introduced: "It is exciting to be creating the four new Houses of **Callaghan, Callan, Doyle** and **Kavanagh** in the lead up to our 130 year anniversary in 2019."

The Houses at OLMC Parramatta are named after people and places associated with Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, and the Sisters from Callan, Ireland who established the College in 1889.

Each House has a crest, colour and motto and the Houses have been paired, such that Sister Houses have been created: Stanley has been paired with Kavanagh, McAuley with Doyle, Clare with Callan and Mercedes with Callaghan.

Director of Pastoral Care, Anne-Maree Donnelly says research shows, overwhelmingly, that the Vertical House structure establishes strong links between girls, teachers and parents/carers: "Students will be grouped in Houses rather than Year Groups for Pastoral Care. For example, Homeroom Groups will be House based and will include girls from Year 7 through to Year 12.

The Homeroom Group provides a sense of belonging to a 'small family unit' within a larger House family and bonds are created between peers of all ages. Students will have the same teacher and House Mentor throughout their OLMC journey."

"Mercy Girls forming the new Houses of Callaghan, Callan, Doyle and Kavanagh are literally making history. While some girls may initially be reluctant to leave their current House, there is also energy and excitement around starting something new.

The girls remaining in the current Houses of Clare, McAuley, Mercedes and Stanley now have a duty to renew their House spirit and work with their new Sister House. There are exciting times ahead as girls will also have new lockers in their House colour in 2018, as well as new House shirts. There will be House events, formal and informal functions as well as inter-House competitions," said Anne-Maree Donnelly.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

OLMC Parramatta links past and future with new Alumnae Scholarship

Coinciding with the College's 130th anniversary celebrations in 2019, a new **Mercy Scholarship for Alumnae** will be introduced to give daughters, granddaughters, or great granddaughters of OLMC ex-students the opportunity for a Mercy education at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta.



The new Mercy Scholarship for Alumnae was announced at the annual Alumnae Reunion Day held in September 2017. The OLMC Alumnae Association will fund one scholarship for a student entering the College in Year 7. The Scholarship will cover tuition fees for a six-year period from Year 7 to Year 12. The intention is to enable the daughter, granddaughter or great granddaughter of an OLMC Parramatta ex-student to be educated at the College. The ex-student applying for the Scholarship for their daughter/granddaughter/great granddaughter is required to be a registered member of the Alumnae Association. The College also offers a Mercy Scholarship for Academic Excellence and for Music Excellence.

OLMC Parramatta Alumnae Association President Christine Robertson says the Scholarship is a wonderful idea. "At the AGM, the assembled Alumnae were presented with the opportunity to endorse this exciting new partnership with the College. It was truly a momentous occasion when the proposal to establish and support a Mercy Scholarship for Alumnae was unanimously accepted."

"The Scholarship establishes another genuine connection between the past, present and future of the College, linking our alumnae to future education at OLMC in the Mercy tradition."

"This new initiative also recognises the strong tradition at OLMC of many generations of women from the same family attaining a Mercy education at OLMC Parramatta. This new scholarship serves to recognise and encourage the continuation of this rich tradition into the future," said OLMC Parramatta Alumnae Association President Christine Robertson.

Principal Stephen Walsh said he was delighted with the new scholarship initiative and the opportunities it presents for recipients: "From my conversations with ex-students, I get a strong sense that a Mercy education is truly treasured. They often feel very privileged to have attended the College. This is a chance for ex-students to have their daughters, granddaughters or great granddaughters experience that excellent education that they received."

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

International Women's Day Celebrations at Padua College

On Thursday 8 March, staff and students at Padua College gathered to assemble 200 birthing kits as part of our celebration of International Women's Day (IWD).



Around 300,000 women and 3 million newborns die each year from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Most of these deaths occur in developing countries. To help address this, the Birthing Kit Foundation of Australia (BKFA) provides an opportunity for volunteers to engage in the assembly of birthing kits, which are a simple and effective tool for basic infection prevention and first-line childbirth care.

The components are selected in line with global best practice and consist only of the essential items required to support the documented six principles of cleanliness at birth for mothers in high-risk and emergency settings.

Often the problems in our world seem insurmountable and confronting to students who feel powerless to change the status quo. Under the umbrella of Social Justice at Padua College, we wanted to offer the students an experience of providing practical assistance to women and babies in the developing world who die in alarming numbers.

The kit is a simple way that we can alert the students to the inequality, which exists today between nations such as ours and our near neighbours. The 200 birthing kits assembled on IWD added to the 1,600 kits which were assembled by Year 12 students while on Retreat earlier this year.

Bernadette Young
Social Justice Co-ordinator

Padua College Aspire9 Launch

On Thursday 8 February, Padua College Year 9 students gathered at the top of Arthurs Seat on the Mornington Peninsula to celebrate the launch of the Aspire9 program. Hiking from different locations in Main Ridge, Waterfall Gully and the Bunerong track, to the one destination at Seawinds Gardens at Arthurs Seat, the climb was symbolic of the various challenges that the students will face this year.



Seawinds provided an incredible backdrop to the Liturgy, which began with an acknowledgement of the Bunerong people, the traditional owners of the Mornington Peninsula and Westernport Bay. During the Liturgy, the significance of the word 'Aspire' was explored and our students were challenged to direct their hopes and ambitions towards achieving their goals in 2018 and beyond. Using the Parable of the Mustard Seed, students were asked to develop and apply their gifts, to be that small mustard seed that grows into greatness.



Activity sessions followed and focused on building cross-campus relationships and asking students to reflect on their journey and the hopes and dreams for their future. Every student was given a stone to take away as a physical reminder of the strength of their character and the journey that will need to be made to reach their personal goals for the year.

Alliance of Girls Schools

Two students from St Aloysius College, Adelaide Year 12 SRC Executive members attended the Alliance of Girls' Schools of Australasia Student Leadership Conference on the Gold Coast during the January holidays. Jasmine Dallimore and Lucy Eaton returned to school eager to put some of their new ideas and skills into action here at SAC. Working with their fellow representatives, they are keen to leave their mark on the College and their world in positive ways, and their determination to make things happen is impressive. They have also built connections with other student leaders that will continue to inspire and motivate them. At St Aloysius College we are seeing a high level of participation of senior students in the Justice and Mercy (JAM) group this year, and we look forward to the new ideas that will emerge as they work together.



SIA (Support in Action)

SAC students from Reception and Year 6 joined together to create a hand wreath during one of their first SIA group sessions. The wreath is a symbol of the students' supportive and collaborative relationship.

Students in Year 6 also joined Reception students on Shrove Tuesday to share some yummy pancakes!





Shrove Tuesday

On Shrove Tuesday, the Reception and Year 6 students had a delicious time eating pancakes together. With the help of some great weather, we had lots of fun and enjoyed bonding and sharing quality time. The Reception students were very grateful to have the Year 6s as their friends and so were the Year 6 students. This was a great day shared together, eating, playing and celebrating Lent. We are all hoping to have more time to spend with each other. Gabriella Pinneri 6SS (Primary JAMleader)



Shrove Tuesday is better known as Pancake Day. On Tuesday 13 February we took turns making pancakes. My class 5/6 LM joined with 6 RL and R-JO. The teachers cooked all the pancakes for their classes. They were delicious! Everyone really enjoyed them and added different toppings such as jam, lemon, honey, maple syrup, whipped cream and much more. Some classes spent time with their SIA sisters. Everyone had lots of smiles on their faces.

Zoe Patfull-Bulmer 6LM (Primary JAM leader)

Ash Wednesday

"I thought going to the cathedral for Lent was an amazing experience, it was very multi-cultural, and the singer sang beautifully."

It was very interesting to go to the Ash Wednesday Mass in the cathedral because there were lots of people there. The people who

attended were members of the public, as well as students from CBC and Black friars. Another interesting thing was that there were about six or seven priests there, as well as a priest visiting from Sri Lanka and the Archbishop. It was a great experience and a good way to start off the season of Lent. Ivy Larwood 9RF



I thought going to the cathedral for Lent was an amazing experience, it was very multi-cultural and the singer sang very beautifully. It was very different to the other times we have had mass, since there were a lot more people. It was a public mass which also included two other schools. I had a wonderful time and I'm sure everyone else did too. Meena Faqiri 9RF

I enjoyed experiencing the differences between going to a public mass because we normally hold school masses. The music, for example, sounded more reverent than the ones we sing at school. Heather McCormick 9RF

I thought the whole ceremony was lovely. The songs and prayers were beautiful, it was a great way to start off lent. Lily-Mae Browne 9RF



I absolutely loved going to the mass at the cathedral! It was a beautiful ceremony, with amazing music and inspiring words. I especially loved talking to the priest after the mass! Gabriela Coelho 9RF

I thought the Ash Wednesday Mass at the cathedral was pretty good. It was a good experience to attend a mass at the cathedral that was out of the ordinary. Kirsty Rivera 9RF

International Women's Day



The speaker at this year's International Women's Day Breakfast was Tanya Hosch, an Australian social activist. She is a Torres Strait Islander woman who lives in Adelaide, and is the Joint Campaign Director for RECOGNISE. Given the concern about the lack of progress towards closing the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, Tanya's words were a timely reminder of how important this issue is for our country. This year, the SAC Justice and Mercy group organised some new activities to mark International Women's Day, including sharing stories of inspirational women in our society and holding a cake stall to raise funds for services that support women in need.

Caritas Australia Just Leadership Day

Caritas Australia is a Catholic organisation that assists communities in 36 countries in Asia, Africa and Australia by providing basic needs and skills to improve lives. Project Compassion is one part of Caritas Australia. During Lent, we are asked to give to others and one way of doing this is to support the works of Project Compassion by donating money that will be used to assist many communities.



One of the projects SAC Year 6 JAM leaders discussed at the Just Leadership Day was how to raise awareness of the necessity of having clean water, essential for the health of children.

On Wednesday 21 February, JAM (Justice & Mercy) leaders from lots of different schools came together and talked about Caritas Australia. Suzy from Caritas talked to us and shared lots of sad and happy information about people that Caritas has helped. We got into groups of three, with people from other schools and discussed some questions and issues. Our guest speaker, Fr George who is the Head of Caritas Australia came to talk to us about his youth in Sri Lanka. This experience was really interesting and fun.

Alicia Rudko RL (Year 6 Primary JAM leader)

When I went to Caritas Australia- Just leadership Day, I learnt lots of inspiring things that I didn't know about that were happening around the world. Caritas works in many countries. One activity involved a beach ball and as Suzy said a word such as Caritas she threw the ball to someone and they had to say a word related to Caritas. I had fun meeting other students from other schools and working as a team with my own school to create new ideas.

Mia Young TN (Year 7 Primary JAM leader)

Mercy in Mind

This year at St Aloysius College, North Melbourne we celebrated the 450th birthday of our name Saint, St Aloysius Gonzaga. St Aloysius Gonzaga was born on the 9th of March 1568 and is the patron Saint of Youth. On the anniversary day, the entire school joined together in a commemorative Liturgy. We were fortunate also to be joined in prayer by our guests from across Australia who were at the College as part of the Mercy Education Deputy Principals' Conference. This occasion presented an opportune time to celebrate the year of the National Year of Youth as was identified by the Australian Bishops. As part of celebrating the Year of Youth, students and staff from St Aloysius College will gather with other youth at the 'Rise' festival, an event run by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and led by Bishop Mark Edwards.

Coinciding with the year of Youth and the anniversary of St Aloysius' birth, this year marks the first year of a new initiative at St Aloysius College, the Mercy Ethos Program. This program is specially created for Year 8 and Year 9 cohorts to bring them closer to 'Mercy'. This program runs independently to the Religious Education curriculum and is based on the stories and teaching of Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy.



The program aims to bring student's attention to Mercy Values and gives our students the opportunities to discuss and explore what being a 'Mercy Girl' really means. These sessions offer our students opportunities to build self-worth and self-esteem; to

become 'their best selves'; in order to contribute to building more inclusive and compassionate societies. This program has been well received and will become a stable part of a Mercy Education here at St Aloysius College.

Mr Michael Chesser

Catholic Mission and Mercy Ethos Leader
Liturgy Coordinator



Strategy 2020

Sacred Heart College, Geelong launched its Strategy 2020 in earnest in January 2017. The strategy provides a roadmap for three years and has as its five key strategic pillars:

- 1.The Sacred Heart Way
- 2.Life Worthy Learning
- 3.Healthy and Safe Environment
- 4.Working Together for Excellence
- 5.Stewardship



This year, our attention will continue to focus on the five priorities selected for 2017 and our actions will also concentrate on six new initiatives.

To help implement our Strategy 2020 we expanded our College Advisory Council last year to include a subcommittee whose focus is strategy. Full details of our Strategy 2020 can be found on the College's [website](#).

The Court Precinct

In acknowledging that we need to prepare our students for the world in which they will take their place, we realised that we needed a facility where the best of learning and teaching in science and associated disciplines could be interwoven with the best of learning and teaching in the arts.

Our priority became the creation of a new science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) building where creativity and innovation could meet.



For Sacred Heart College, the Court Precinct will be that building and development will take place in three consecutive stages over three and a half years.

Stage 1 commenced in 2016 with the construction of a two-storey building. This stage was completed in July last year and students are now learning in spaces that reflect real life contemporary learning.

Stage 2 commenced in July and will include maker space areas, general learning areas, science laboratories and numerous collaborative spaces. Work continues to progress well for Stage 2 and we anticipate that students will have access in September.

Stages 3 and 3A will involve the creation of a light-filled atrium that will form a new entrance to the College and present an uninterrupted view through the campus to the sacred space of our Chapel. Works will commence in April 2019 with a scheduled completion date of October 2019.

Redesigning Learning at SHC – Network Model of Learning

During Semester 1 2017, the College's focus was on building a *Case for Change* for redesigning learning at SHC and testing some of our long-held assumptions. A literature review, field trips to schools across Victoria and South Australia and consultation with staff, parents, academics, students and industry leaders enabled us to develop a program of seven phases:

- Phase 1 - The Big Picture *
- Phase 2 - Learning Environment *
- Phase 3 - Learning Program
- Phase 4 - Organisation of Time
- Phase 5 Organisation of Students
- Phase 6 Organisation of Staff
- Phase 7 System Change

* phase completed 2017

Our findings from Phases 1 and 2 led to the development of two pilot programs, both launched in Semester 2:

The Bradbury Club: a unique trans disciplinary collaborative group of cross-aged students who work on long-term problem-solving projects that benefit the community. They are supported by teaching and school support staff, academics and nine partner organisations, including the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne and Deakin, the Garvan Institute, EnviroLab, Healthy Communities and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mixed Mentor Groups(alternative to traditional homeroom groupings):a trial model of pastoral care comprising cross-age student volunteers from Years 7 to Year 12. The model seeks to reimagine the ways in which students can develop community without the limitations of age and link with significant adults who can support their learning, social and spiritual development.

BACK TO TOP ↑

Jade is Making a Difference

During Year 8, students at Santa Maria College, Attadale participate in the Enhanced Learning Program, Explore8. In this program, students look for ways they can make a difference to societal problems and how they can create change.



Jade Destremau (Year 9) completed the Explore8 program last year. For her project, Jade looked at ways the College could minimise its plastic waste and decided to look at the Café and their use of plastic packaging. Her story is below.

"I got the idea for my project from my mentor and Science Teacher Ms Fay. We discussed how I could make a difference within the school community and we came up with the idea to look at the Café and their plastic use. Sustainability has always been very important to me. I believe we are all responsible for the damage our actions cause to the environment, and we should try to minimise our impact.

Plastic is devastating to the environment, especially single use plastic, that we use once then throw away, like food containers the Café was using. These containers aren't recycled. The Café uses over 250,000 containers each year. The exact number of cutlery, lids, straws and containers used in a school year adds up to 266 000 pieces of plastic, which I found horrifying. That was what made me really focus on my project. I didn't realise it would be that bad.

I had to do quite a bit of research! My first steps were to go to the Café and discuss with the staff the amount of plastic they use and get a rough idea of pricing, so I could compare it to some companies that produced similar products (size, dimensions etc), but made from biodegradable material.

I then spoke with Brett, the Catering Manager, with our proposal and costing comparisons. He passed our message onto his managers at Compass Group, the company that manages the Café. After some correspondence with them during Explore8 and during the holidays, I managed to get their promise that by Term 2, this year, we would have a plastic free café.

Through conversations we held, I was able to convince them that plastics are bad for the environment and there are other options.

I chose to recommend products made from bagasse, or sugar cane pulp. It is a waste product produced when sugarcane is crushed in sugar production. It is fully biodegradable and biodegrades in 30-120 days.

I think that by taking the initiative and showing that students would prefer it if we were more environmentally conscious, it helped convince those in charge to make a change. Also, I did a lot of the groundwork for them; obtaining pricing comparisons, how much they would have to order so nothing would change, finding a company where everything would be delivered and showing that the price wouldn't go up; it made it easier for them. I also surveyed 100 students to see what they thought about the idea and 88% said they would prefer it if we used biodegradable materials.

The cost is much the same using biodegradable products as it is using plastic. People tend to think plastic is the cheapest and most economically viable option, but you can find products very similar in price that are much better for the environment. Plastics will always have to be used in some way, but single use plastics, like shopping bags and food packaging, should really be minimised (if not banned). By not using plastic at our school, we are contributing to a more plastic free environment."

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

A Community Celebration

In the second week of Term, Santa Maria College, Attadale we were very privileged to have Archbishop Costelloe to celebrate our Opening Mass, along with Father Sean Fernandez from the Attadale Parish. It was a special evening celebrating our 80th Year as a College, the

commissioning of Jennifer Oaten as Principal and the commissioning of 46 students and four staff as Special Ministers of Holy Communion.



It was beautiful to gather as a faith community to celebrate the commencement of the school year. To have with us many of our Sisters of Mercy, Deputy Director of Catholic Education WA, Peter Yensch and from Mercy Education, Board Chair Lucy Molony, Board Directors, Mary Retel and Tony Wheeler and Chief Executive Christopher Houlihan.

I was humbled to be commissioned to serve as Principal at our Opening Mass with all our staff, students and many families present. I look forward to the challenges and the joy my new role will bring", said Jennifer Oaten.

We received a beautiful comment from one of our visiting Mercy sisters.

"Your school site must be the envy of many people. It was so glorious just sitting at the Mass and looking at God's creation before us. The river, trees, nature and the whole environment. God is great isn't HE!"

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Frayne 'noodle palace' raises funds for Project Compassion

Students from the Senior School at Ursula Frayne Catholic College raised funds for Project Compassion this year by holding their very own 'Noodle Palace' pop-up restaurant.



The Siena One Cluster Form class helped to prepare and sell noodles, drinks and sweets during their lunch break on Thursday 15 March.

The Noodle Palace idea was chosen to raise funds because students identified how many of their friends are in love with noodles, especially the extra spicy flavours.



Decorations adorned the hallway leading to the palace outside the College's industry grade kitchen area, where serving tables had lots of different flavoured noodles to choose from.

On the day, enthusiastic students flooded the stairwell to get up to the palace and demand was much larger than the supply.

Ms Jo Searson, Coordinator of Home Economics, said the best thing about this initiative was "having such an enthusiastic crowd of supporters from across the campus".

All the hard work was worth it, with a total of \$709.20 being raised for Project Compassion through this one College activity.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

Villa's 100th birthday celebrates Mercy Women!

This week marks one hundred years since the Sisters of Mercy first welcomed pupils to Villa Maria College, Christchurch. With their clear objective to deliver quality education for girls from Catholic families in and around Canterbury, the Sisters provided a place of learning, a place of prayer, and a place where young girls blossomed into the leaders of tomorrow.



A hundred years on, and Villa Maria College is still delivering on that undertaking. The big birthday was celebrated by more than 1,500 guests over the weekend, culminating in a Special Mass and morning tea, concelebrated by Bishop-elect Paul Martin.

"We are proud of our humble beginnings, we are grateful for the hard work given freely by the Sisters throughout our history, and we are delighted to celebrate this special milestone with our community," said Ms Deborah Brosnahan, College Principal.

"The College was thrilled to see past pupils travelling from all over the world to be part of the celebrations, reconnecting with their friends, teachers and school staff. There were stories shared, memories relived, many laughs, and moments of quiet reflection for those who have passed."

The weekend was opened with a live show, complete with music and drama, and even a choir performance by past pupils! The show was

followed by a glamorous reception under the stars in the College courtyard.

On Saturday, the College hosted a family-friendly fun day, functions for past College boarders and staff, official class photographs, school tours, food trucks and a craft market. That night, the magnificent marquee on the College grounds was transformed into a sophisticated Ball, where guests were treated to a delicious meal and dancing until late.

Sunday's Special Mass and Morning Tea, hosted by the Villa Maria College Foundation, was the highlight of the weekend. Guests from near and far gathered to honour all that the past 100 years have encompassed and all that the next 100 will hold.

"Villa Maria's Centennial will continue to be celebrated throughout 2018, but this weekend was a fitting tribute to the College, its founders and all who have called Villa home," added Ms Brosnahan.

Villa's oldest registered attendee for the Centennial weekend, Mrs Brenda Cunneen, 96, is shown cutting the official birthday cake with Villa's youngest enrolled pupil, 10-year-old Miss Jordana Johnston.

[BACK TO TOP ↑](#)

AMSSA Staff Conference

August 8 – 10 2019

Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney

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