



AMSSA REPORT NOVEMBER 2017

Welcome to the final AMSSA Newsletter for 2017. I trust the year has been a successful and productive one for all Mercy schools and, no doubt, staff and students are looking forward to the long holiday break.

2017 has been a very successful year for AMSSA. The Mercy Staff Conference was very well attended by Mercy staff across Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. The conference evaluations were very positive and will be very helpful to the organisers of the next **Mercy Staff Conference which will be held in Sydney from August 8 – 10, 2019**

The planning for the next **Mercy Student Conference which will be held in Perth from September 22 – 26, 2018** is well underway. Further information will be available early in 2018.

The new AMSSA Executive met for the first time by teleconference in October. Paddy McEvoy from St Aloysius College, Adelaide is the new President of AMSSA and Brian Turner from Catholic College, Bendigo and Stephen Walsh from Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta are new members of the Executive.

At the end of the year there are a number of staff who will be leaving Mercy schools for new experiences and challenges. On behalf of the AMSSA Executive, I thank them for their commitment to their Mercy schools and wish them well for the future.

I would like to acknowledge three principals who will be leaving their schools at the end of the year: Mark Pauschmann from James Sheahan High School, Orange, Ian Elder from Santa Maria College, Attadale and Julie Ryan from Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg. Each one has been a great supporter of AMSSA and, in particular, Julie Ryan who has been a member of the Executive and past President of AMSSA.

Congratulations to Paulina Skerman, the Principal of St Patricks College, Townsville for being nominated for the Telstra Queensland Business Woman of the Year. Paulina is a member of the AMSSA Executive and has been actively involved in establishing the Mercy Principals group.

Thank you all for your support of AMSSA over the year, in particular to those who attended the Mercy Staff Conference and to the schools who have contributed so many articles and photos to the newsletters. I wish you all the joys and blessings of Christmas and a relaxing and refreshing holiday break.

Kitty Guerin

AMSSA Executive Officer

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ALL HALLOWS SCHOOL

THE POWER OF BEING FULLY PRESENT

Earlier in Term 4, ten Year 10 All Hallows' students joined Year 10 students from St Joseph's Gregory Terrace to participate in the second of two annual Edmund Rice Camps, Head2Heart Program for 2017. Over the course of the camp, our girls were buddied with a child aged between 6-12 years old and participated in activities that facilitated a camp experience for a group of children who otherwise, would not have been given the opportunity. The experience required our girls to prioritise forming a close bond with their buddy, which challenged them to put their own needs aside and focus solely on those of another. Edmund Rice Camps are facilitated by a number of volunteers many of whom are current and past students of All Hallows'. Our Year 10 girls were well supported by the guidance of two current students from Years 11 and 12 as well as two past students.



The two student reflections below capture the learnings about the power of being fully present to another (especially those living with certain disadvantages) that were gained from such an experience:



"Over the weekend, I was lucky enough to take part in an Edmund Rice Camp. I really enjoyed the camp and especially loved knowing that I was able to help my buddy have the best time. In the beginning it was hard to get my buddy to concentrate on one activity but once he found something that he was passionate about, he dragged my partner and me around to show everyone his amazing artwork. It made me so proud to see him happy and enjoying himself. The camp helped me to grow as a person because it made me realise the importance of listening to and understanding what other people want to do so that everyone can have a great time. It was both an amazing and rewarding experience and I can't wait to participate in more camps in the future."

"Having the opportunity to attend Edmund Rice Camp's Head to Heart program was absolutely amazing. I loved every second of it. It's hard to pick the most enjoyable moment on camp but when you see your "little buddy" really immerse themselves in the activities and step outside of their comfort zone it really makes you smile. The fact that all of these kids were from very different backgrounds to us meant that we had to also step outside our comfort zone and as the ERC leaders put it, "be a little kid for 24hrs" which meant that the whole group engaged and pushed themselves in everything they did. I am taking away many amazing memories and new friends from this camp that I aim to keep forever. I hope to be able to extend the skills that I have learnt on this camp into other areas of my life and hopefully participate in more camps in the future. H2H has let me grow as a person enabling me to push my boundaries, be more confident and enthusiastic as I engage fully with others around."

As a part of our Mercy Action program the Head2Heart camp experience enables our Year 10 girls to develop skills of leadership while giving back to the wider community, demonstrating our core mercy values of compassion and service towards others. All Hallows' staff members have facilitated this involvement which includes a preparation program on effective communication as well as opportunities for reflection on the experience so that skills learned will only enrich the development of quality inter-personal relationships in the spirit of gospel values.

Angela O'Malley
Director of Mission

INSPIRATIONAL HUMAN SPIRIT

In early October, All Hallows' hosted a screening of the recently released documentary 'The Staging Post'. After viewing the film, attendees participated in a Q&A style session where students and invited guests from the wider community spoke to those who featured prominently in the film. This documentary focuses on the real characters of Muzafar and Khadim, two Afghan Hazara refugees who had no option but to live in Indonesia with the uncertainty of ever being resettled safely elsewhere. The inspirational film follows these two Hazara refugees as they build a school for their community—and with this, also a strong network of support within the local society. It encouraged the audience to realise the power of friends, commitment and community, and how an educational revolution can be started from a simple, and hopeful idea. It was great to have Muzafar who has now been resettled in Adelaide as our guest on the night and to speak

with Khadim via skype from Los Angeles where he has now resettled as well as the film's director and producer, Jolyon Hoff.

The event was organised by the All Hallows Human Rights Group and proceeds from the night went towards helping the School in the documentary. The Human Rights Group were very pleased to find out that their efforts resulted in over \$1,500 being raised for the School in Indonesia.

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DAMASCUS COLLEGE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF MERCY EDUCATION ON OUR SITE

On Saturday 28th October, more than 500 past students, staff and families of Damascus College and our founding Colleges; Sacred Heart College, St Paul's Technical College and St Martin's in the Pines, gathered to celebrate the 50 year anniversary of Mercy education on our beautiful Damascus site.



The fifty acres of land was bequeathed to the Sisters of Mercy by Miss Alice Fanning upon her death in February 1960, in recognition of the care that she had received from the Sisters. In 1964 it was decided to

develop the site for the Senior School of Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines and the foundation stone was laid in 1966. In 1995, this beautiful site that Alice bequeathed became Damascus College.

Sr Marie Davey, Sister of Mercy and Deputy Principal of Damascus College said that the planning for the day began as a celebration of a reunion of the students of 1967 – the first St Martin's students – but then we decided there were many more reasons to celebrate and so it developed into a wonderful gathering of people who have been part of our Mercy story.

What a great decision! "It was a really happy day that brought together people from across the decades to reminisce together, to be amazed at the changes that have taken place and to enjoy one another's company," she said.

Sr Marie is retiring at the end of this year, after 53 years in Catholic education, so this event was also a special occasion to recognise her and acclaim all that she has done for Damascus and Sacred Heart College communities.

To commemorate this anniversary, we also opened and blessed the Commemorative Walk; a 240 metre bush walking track that leads to a Sharing Circle. This track hosts 12 signs in remembrance of those who have gone before us, both living and those who have died, and form an integral part of our Damascus College story. This is now a place for everyone to enjoy, where we can gather to reflect, learn, listen, grow and share stories and knowledge in a caring, respectful environment.



The celebration included formalities where past student, Dr Sandra Harvey (Class of 1973) spoke of how her Mercy education has shaped

her life, and Sr Veronica Lawson also spoke of how the Sisters of Mercy came to develop our site to the beautiful College we have today.

The Damascus College choir sang beautiful songs throughout the formal proceedings, including a wonderful rendition of the 'Suscipe' dedicated to the Sisters of Mercy.

"It truly was a special occasion where we enjoyed welcoming back past and present students, staff and families, to celebrate this 50 year milestone of Mercy education, on this site" said Sr Marie.

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DAMASCUS STUDENTS SELECTED FOR GREASE – THE ARENA EXPERIENCE

After years of private dance lessons, Damascus Year 8 students Payton Overall and Lana Keevins were recently selected as part of the dance ensemble for the 2018 Grease – The Arena Experience, to be held at Hisense Arena in April 2018.

Both students auditioned in August this year, at Hisense Arena and two weeks later, were advised of their selection.

Payton said that she is excited to be a part of this performance in Melbourne. Both girls will now participate in numerous rehearsals in the lead up to the main performance in April 2018.

"We have a boot camp in Brunswick, where the 500 ensemble performers will rehearse over three days in rotations of singing, dancing and acting," Payton said.

"It should be great fun, as I just love performing."

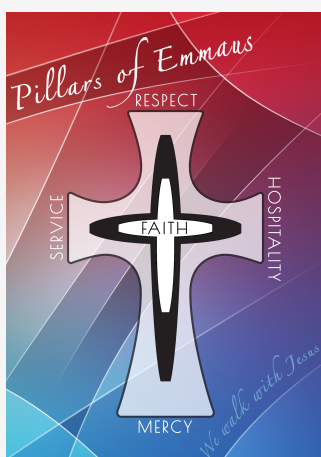
Lana said she hopes this experience will assist her in participating in other performances locally here in Ballarat.

"It would be great to be a part of future BLOC performances as they become available", she said.

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EMMAUS COLLEGE LAUNCHES CONTEMPORARY MISSION STATEMENT

Throughout 2017, the community of Emmaus Catholic College at Kemps Creek has been on a journey to renew and reconnect with its faith identity.



On February 2, 1988, Emmaus College welcomed its first cohort of students and the young men and women of Western Sydney began walking the Emmaus road. Although a diocesan school, the charism of the Sisters of Mercy was very significant in the formative years of the College during which time Sister Patricia Tully RSM and Sister Josephine Brimo RSM held the positions of Principal and Religious Education Coordinator respectively.

Almost 30 years on, the staff and students of the College embraced 2017 as an opportunity to reconnect with these spiritual roots in order to develop a renewed sense and contemporary understanding of the Emmaus faith identity.

The year began with College staff exploring the values and themes embedded within the Emmaus story and the unique expression of these at the College in light of the influence of the charism of the Sisters of Mercy. Through a process of discussion and discernment, the 'Pillars of Emmaus' were eventually identified as the core values of the College and a graphical representation of these developed around the Mercy Cross.

The design of the *Pillars of Emmaus* graphic affirms that **faith** in Christ is at the heart of every aspect of College life at Emmaus as reflected in the College motto, 'we walk with Jesus'. **Mercy**, placed at the foot of the cross is a reminder that the charism of the Sisters of Mercy continues to underpin College life. Its placement also references the colloquial name 'the walking nuns' that was given to the Sisters of Mercy for their willingness to be in amongst the community as women of action. **Respect**, placed at the top of the cross, affirms the Emmaus commitment to ethical decision-making, moral responsibility and excellence in learning. Finally, placed on the arms of the cross are the pillars of **service** and **hospitality** reflecting the community's

commitment to not only reach out to but also welcome others in the same way as Christ.

A further aspect of the renewal of the faith identity of the College saw the installation of sacred spaces in all of the College classrooms. The inclusion of the Pillars of Emmaus graphic, a Mercy Cross, depiction of the Emmaus story, homeroom candle, year group prayer book and liturgical cloth will ensure that the sacred spaces serve as an ever present reminder of the spirituality of the College.

With an enlivened and enriched sense of the Emmaus faith identity, the College community looks forward to 2018 and the opportunity to celebrate 30 years walking together along the Emmaus road.

Briony Mowbray
Director of Learning and Mission
Emmaus Catholic College

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MERCEDES COLLEGE PERTH

THE LITTLE MERMAID WOWS AUDIENCES

Musicals at Mercedes have had a very long history. Many ex-students fondly remember the musicals performed during their years here and the demanding but rewarding hours of work with friends and teachers.



This year's musical production of *The Little Mermaid* saw us rise to the challenge of taking our production from within the safe walls of our school to the magnificent Regal Theatre. This meant we could embrace the space required to represent the two worlds that collide when Ariel desires to leave the safety of her ocean to be "where the people are". We needed big sets, big costumes and big sea creatures!

Colour, fun, energy and liveliness were all characteristics of this production and the College received rave reviews from those who saw it – not only people from our own school, but also from people who just came to the Regal to see the show because they love the story and love Disney.

"What a night! We're regular theatre go'ers and have also seen shows by Penrhos College and WAPPA at The Regal - they were both good. Mercedes College and their Little Mermaid blew everything else out of the water."

From the quality of the acting, orchestra, singing and dancing to costumes, sound, lighting and props - EVERYTHING was done perfectly. Your production outshone many professional shows we've seen." (a member of the general public)

We have a lot of people to thank for this production – but mostly the students who participated. There were over 120 girls involved in one way or another – from acting, singing, dancing to creating costumes, playing in the band, being a crew member, or being a puppeteer.

Congratulations to all of these students and a big thank you to all parents who supported this huge production in so many ways. Audience numbers were incredible; much higher than we dared hope and two of our shows were very close to completely sold out. We sold over 3200 tickets over 4 shows!

Well done everyone!! We hope you enjoy these images that highlight our world under the sea, our world above the sea, and the place where dreams can come true.

Kathleen Cocks
Head of Arts

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FUNDRAISING FOR THE MCGRATH FOUNDATION

During the week of 15 May Prefects were being very proactive promoting their fundraising projects for the McGrath Foundation. They were selling socks and delicious homemade treats to raise money for the Foundation for the work they do for breast cancer research. But the highlight of the week was definitely on Wednesday, when spectators paid an admission fee to watch their Year 12 Prefects play a charity netball game against the Prefects from Trinity.



The Coady Sports Centre was packed with cheering students encouraging their senior students in their efforts to win. The day was a huge success with the College raising over \$1,200, and also winning in the netball game!

FASHION FOR COMPASSION

On the 18th of August, A-list stars along with staff, students, friends and families turned out to support the annual Young Mercies Fashion for Compassion inspired by the famous New York Fashion Shows. Hundreds of people posed for the paparazzi on the red carpet flaunting their stylish outfits for the camera before entering the hall which had been transformed into the Big Apple. It was a night the VIP guests would never forget as they wondered through Central Park and caught a glimpse of the streets of New York through the windows.



The night opened with an exciting performance from our very own talented dancers to Frank Sinatra's New York, New York. After the performance, students from Mercedes and Trinity along with Kalini models, strutted down the runway in designs from Periscope, Pigeonhole, Kalini, Bronze Snake, Ruck Rover, Merge, Cheep, Cbf and Two minded as well as the Year 8 textiles collection and Year 12 ball dresses. The highlight of the evening was the teachers making their debut as models walking down the runway in their own chic items. Throughout the evening

light refreshments were provided to enjoy with the nights activities. More entertainment was showcased as singing sensations took to the stage along with another spectacular performance from the dancers. The hosts also provided light entertainment and humour between the clothing collections.

Over the night the Young Mercies raised more than \$5,000 for the Street Soccer Ministry. The show would not have been possible without the support of the college community and sponsors who enabled the Young Mercies to bring the runway straight from New York to our School.

Hannah Panabianca (Year 11)

MOUNT ST BERNARD COLLEGE STORY DOGS WITH TALE TO BE TOLD



Mount St Bernard College is utilising the services of a four-legged furry friend to help improve students' wellbeing, confidence and learning. Introduced this year, it has had an immediate positive impact on students.

Gus is a young six-month old Staffordshire Bull Terrier owned by Mount St Bernard College's Heads of Residential, Dave and Tina Scheffe.

Because he was so young when they got him four months ago, Principal, Mr. David Finch gave permission for Gus to stay at school with his owners in their office.

Having worked with dogs and teenagers for many years, Dave and Tina saw the potential in having Gus at MSB as a therapy dog to help reduce anxiety and improve wellbeing among both students and staff.

"Once the students saw him, they immediately bonded with him and wanted to spend time with him," Dave said. "Many of our students are boarders, so Gus is great for students who are feeling lonely and just want some companionship.

"It has evolved from there to the point where some staff are programming time with Gus for the students who are meeting all the criteria in the classroom. If the student meets that criteria they get to spend half an hour with Gus, take him for a walk, spend time with him and just play with him."

Dave wrote MSB's policy for having animals on site, covering all aspects of health and safety to ensure Gus' presence continues to improve the wellbeing of students.

"Gus genuinely loves the attention, and he rejects the students who are rough, noisy and loud and we use that as a good social educator

for them as well as talking about how not everybody likes noisy and rough people,” Dave said.

“Students know if they want to spend time with Gus they have to moderate their behaviour so that's actually working out really well with a number of students.”

Students just can't get enough of Gus.

“I think bringing Gus to MSB was a good idea because he gets to interact with the students, and the students love him,” said student Elizabeth Richardson-Eveleigh. “If any of the students are upset, they can go and see him and cheer up.”

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IDENTITY MATTERS

Twelve students from Mount St Bernard College and one from St Monica's College shared what it's like to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in a unique music video with music producer and film maker, Josh Arnold from Small Town Culture.



The professionally produced video, called *The Spirits are Calling Me*, was part of the Identity Matters project to encourage Queensland students to embrace and share their culture.

"Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people don't often get the opportunity to express their own identity, who they are and where they come from," said Antoinette Cole, Catholic Education Services' Senior Education Officer – Indigenous Education, "so this provided a perfect platform for them to be able to celebrate not only their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture but to share it with others."

"The lyrics of *The Spirits are Calling Me* describe their connectedness to the country and how their spiritual connectedness to their ancestors is guiding and showing them the way as they become young adults," Ms Cole said. "It's beautifully done and the students involved should be really proud of what they achieved."

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancing, singing and traditional language were a major part of the recording, which was written, recorded and videotaped in just three days.

"It was very exciting," Josh said. "The first day was spent writing the song, getting out of the students how they feel about culture and who they are. We practised and recorded it the second day and videoed it the third."

"The students fully own the song. They came up with the melody, played every instrument which featured traditional instruments and sang. The spoken language was beautiful and I think the kids were so proud to speak their language and express that part of themselves."

MSB Principal David Finch was so proud of his students and their achievement that he invited Josh back to the school to create a new school song and video, something Josh and his team are well known for doing with schools across the country.

After writing the new school song *Let your Light Shine* with Principal Finch, Josh and his team then attended the college's NAIDOC celebrations to make the video.

"The College is a melting pot of cultures and different communities so filming during NAIDOC celebrations enabled us to feature the students in their varying cultural costumes," Josh said. "Students danced and lip-synced for the video. It was good-fun and the outcome was beautiful."

Josh's videos in the Far North don't end there. He will also be doing a project for the Tablelands Regional Council later this month for a disaster awareness campaign, which will also feature most of the Catholic schools on the Tablelands, including MSB.

"Mount St Bernard will be the only students in the history of Small Time Culture to have done three videos in one year," Josh said. "That's quite an accomplishment."

Watch *The Spirits are Calling Me* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7krhV36LEOw> and *Let Your Light Shine* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOWUVjhKXrU>.

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BEN SMITH - QCEC - SPIRIT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION AWARD

Working in West Africa, the Amazon and Peru helping those less fortunate opened Ben Smith's eyes to the value of being a teacher.



Ben, who was at Mount St Bernard College and is now a senior Science teacher at St Andrew's Catholic College, was the Cairns Diocese recipient of a prestigious Spirit of Catholic Education Award, an honour bestowed upon seven Queensland educators during Queensland Catholic Education Week.

As a Middle Leader Mathematics and Pastoral Care at MSB, Ben aimed to improve the barriers that limit positive Mathematical educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

His tireless efforts culminated in the Positive Mathematics for Indigenous Students conference held at the College in March 2011,

which attracted over 50 people from over 20 educational institutes.

Ben's efforts have inspired a network of educators across North Queensland to commit to addressing the Mathematical needs of all indigenous students.

As well as volunteering in West Africa, the Amazon and Peru he also worked as an international officer for St Vincent De Paul working with single parents and their children when he realised he wanted to be a teacher.

"I worked helping single parents to take their kids out once and awhile and not always be faced with that doom and gloom of struggling," Ben said. "Doing that and seeing kids happy helped me realise teaching was the way to go.

"I think we have one of the luckier career paths because as a teacher you get to see students grow both externally and internally."

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DIDGE KIDS PUT IN GOLD PERFORMANCES

The Didge Kids from Mount St Bernard College in Herberton overcame illness, fatigue and limited time practising together to win a gold certificate at the four-day Catholic Schools Music Festival August in Brisbane in August.



"Each and every student performed to the absolute best of their ability, exceeding all expectations and producing both a memorable and magical performance," said parent and musician Mark Lane, who trains the group.

"It was very surreal to win, I was completely over the moon."

The 10-member band included three didgeridoo players, two percussionists, one guitar player and four vocalists.

"The schools involved in the festival were predominately orchestral groups, jazz bands and brass bands," Mark said. "Didge Kids was a very different act and we played in the contemporary section because our combination of instruments was very different from the other bands that were playing."

In conjunction with the festival, all students took part in Building Bridges workshops where the boys taught didgeridoo and the girls taught jaw harp.

"The workshops were an interchange of skills and understanding and were valuable because the students had direct interaction with other students," Mark said. "Initially they were very shy, but once some of the young men started to teach didgeridoo the interchange was excellent.

"We also met up with some students who had seen the group perform last year on our tour, so those connections became reconnections."

The group had just returned from a successful performance at the Winton Outback Festival over the term break where they also helped conduct a didgeridoo workshop.

"We were very proud of what we achieved in Brisbane and in Winton," said vocalist Frances Yunupingu. "We also really enjoyed teaching others some of our skills."

Band members include vocalists Francis Yunupingu, Melissa Richardson-Everleigh, Liz Richardson-Everleigh and Rosie Douglas, didgeridoo players Keane Ryan, Matthew Ederer and Liam Kaspersson, guitarist Dale Kepi and percussionists Lee Liddy and Tristan Leo. Joining the group for the Winton Outback Festival due to the absence of a few players were Joshua Lane and Nicholas Wurramarrba.

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OLMC PARRAMATTA HOSTS INAUGURAL WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP FORUM

Four inspirational forum speakers challenged women to embrace all opportunities and to back themselves at the inaugural OLMC Women in Leadership Forum on Wednesday August 23, 2017 in the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta.



Linda Burney MP, Shadow Minister for Human Services and Labor Member for Barton, and Samantha Armytage, Media Personality and

co-host of Channel Seven's Sunrise, were joined by Author Felicity Castagna and Dr Yijiao Jiang, Senior Lecturer at MQ Energy and Environmental Contaminants Research Centre, on a panel that explored the challenges and opportunities faced by women today.



Mercy Girls and their families, representatives from the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta, students and staff from seven other Sydney schools and staff and friends of OLMC listened to the speakers' addresses before joining in the conversation through a Q&A session and a live Twitter and SMS Feed.

Principal Stephen Walsh says that, in many ways, this event goes to the heart of what OLMC Parramatta is about; "For almost 130 years, OLMC has been equipping women to push the boundaries and at the forum, we heard personal experiences and insights from four outstanding women who do this well in their respective fields. We are passionate about giving our girls access to strong female role models and this is one of the reasons we initiated the annual OLMC Women in Leadership Forum.

Every day at the College, through events like this, but also through smaller conversations, it is made abundantly clear that the OLMC story is about strong women of Mercy making an impact."

The Forum speakers shared heartfelt advice, both from a practical and big picture perspective. Linda Burney MP told the audience that we all have something remarkable to share as women and it is important to remind yourself of what makes you who you are. She shared her seven 'Ls' of advice to Listen, Learn, Lose well, have Limits, demonstrate Loyalty, Live well and to think of life as a journey, a Long game.

Samantha Armytage encouraged girls to identify and hold onto their values and to get to know themselves and treat themselves kindly. She challenged girls to be open to opportunities, brave, resilient, to work hard and seek out mentors.

A key theme that came through from each speaker, according to OLMC Deputy Principal Marie Wood, was the importance of being true to yourself – of being authentic; “Their wonderful stories were funny and inspiring and reminded us all to never give up believing in yourself and to live your life with courage and confidence.”

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HOPE A KEY THEME FOR OLMC PARRAMATTA'S MERCY DAY 2017

On Friday September 15, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta students and staff were joined by Bishop of Parramatta, Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD, Deena Yako from the Refugee Council of Australia and the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta to celebrate Mercy Day in the College's 128th year.



The day began in the College's newest building, the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre, with a dialogue between Bishop Vincent, refugee

advocate Mrs Deena Yako, and Pastoral Worker Sister Margaret Sheppard rsm who has worked at Detention Centres on Manus and Christmas Islands.

All three speakers shared their stories with passion and hope. Deena gave a very moving account her experience of seeking protection in Australia after journeying from Iraq. Bishop Vincent, also a refugee from Vietnam during the 1970s, passionately shared the many ways Australia has the capacity to be hospitable, quoting from our National Anthem: 'We've boundless plains to share with those who seek protection.' Sister Margaret Sheppard then addressed the audience, inviting students to become like 'shining lamps' of justice and compassion.



After the dialogue, Bishop Vincent and College Chaplain, Father Walter Fogarty, celebrated Mass and called on the community to live as agents of faith, hope and mercy.

After the Mass, Congregation Leader of the Parramatta Sisters of Mercy, Sister Mary-Louise Petro, challenged the community to engage in 'contemplative action' and to ask ourselves: "In light of what I have heard today, what is one small action I can now do, where God's Spirit is inspiring me to live Mercy?"

Principal Stephen Walsh says Mercy Day is a celebration of our charism and rich heritage: "At OLMC we continue to strive to make Mercy a verb and follow in the footsteps of Sisters of Mercy founder Catherine McAuley, who demonstrated her love of neighbour through service to others. Mercy is an expression of our love for those in our community who are marginalised: it is living out the Gospel values, which promote the dignity and worth of all human beings.

On Mercy Day this year we were so blessed to hear these stories and to know that, despite current government policy, there are many Australians who are out there supporting our sisters and brothers in need – this indeed is Mercy in action.”

Director of Mission Claire Thomas says that Mercy Day is always a very special day for the OLMC community: “The students were very engaged with what they were hearing at the Forum and the Mass and all throughout the festivities that followed, the love for the spirit for Mercy Day was so clearly evident in both students and staff.”

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PADUA COLLEGE YEAR 12 STUDENT, BRIDIE KENNEDY HAS THE WORLD AT HER FEET!



Bridie was recently snapped up by Carlton in the 2017 AFLW draft pick, announced on 18 October. The AFL describes Bridie as “a modern day defender with elite endurance” and that “her run down tackles were a highlight of the 2017 NAN AFLW Under-18 Championships.”

Bridie’s combined result included 1st place in the 2km time trial, and her fast-paced athleticism is legendary. Earlier in the year, in only her second season of football with Dandenong Stingrays, Bridie was crowned the inaugural TAC Cup Girls Best and Fairest Award.

Meanwhile at Padua College, Bridie has been a student who is an incredibly positive role model, influencing younger students with her strong values and active participation in various sporting and social justice activities. A natural leader, Bridie is not only a keen participant in interschool athletics, cross-country and football, but is equally involved in the Catholic Action Program at Padua College and in fundraisers such as the Winter Sleepout in aid of Fusion, Mt Martha.



Bridie had the honour of being offered several “early offers” at universities. She has accepted a place in Teaching and Exercise Science at ACU (Fitzroy Campus) in their Early Achievers’ Program.

For her efforts, Bridie was awarded the 2017 Principal’s General Excellence Award, presented by Mr Anthony Banks to the student in Year 12 who has shown a commitment to their school life across a number of different areas. Bridie was nominated for this prestigious award alongside 16 other students who were vying for the award (from a total cohort of 283). It was presented to her by Mr Banks at the

Padua College Year 12 Valedictory Celebration, held at the Mornington Racecourse on Tuesday 24 October.

The football photo and quote in text above is courtesy of the AFL website: <http://www.afl.com.au/womens/draft>:

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ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE MILDURA AND TIWI COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM 2017

On the 6th of September, four students and two staff left Mildura for Darwin as part of the SJC and Tiwi College Partnership Program, a cultural trip to Darwin and the Tiwi islands. We visited a number of cultural, natural and historical places; The Royal Flying Doctors Museum, Botanical Gardens, NT Art Gallery, Parliament House, Crocosaurus Cove, Crocydlius Park and Mindil Beach Markets.



A highlight of the Darwin stay was releasing baby turtles into the sea and watching adult turtles lay their eggs, which was amazing to witness. We were taught more about Indigenous lifestyle and what it

was like to grow up in a tribe, we were taught how to weave baskets by hand and throw a spear.

We were lucky enough to spend a day in the Kakadu National Park, it has been home to Indigenous people for at least 25,000 years. There is amazing indigenous artwork painted on the rocks from thousands of years ago. Another great experience was to step onto Arnhem Land a very special indigenous land with special significance for our tour guides. However, the most amazing part of the trip was yet to come – The Tiwi Islands.



On Sunday, we caught a ferry to Melville Island, where we were greeted by the Principal of TiwiCollege, Mr Stuart. We were introduced to the staff by all playing a game of touch footy together. Later in the evening, we had dinner with the staff, and were told more about Tiwi culture and how the school operates.

The next day we met The Middle School Girls, and their teacher Miss Katie. We spent the day with them in the class getting to know each other.

On Tuesday, we met Mr Ian who used to teach here at St Joseph's College. He took us over to Bathurst Island for the day where we went to the Sister Anne's Tiwi Cultural Museum and we learnt about the dreamtime stories and history behind Tiwi Culture. Later in the evening we went possum hunting with some of the middle school girls. We took two troopies and many flashlights. Crystal who is a 13 year old Tiwi Girl, ended up catching a baby possum. She was able to tame it and now keeps it as a pet.

The next afternoon we had a whole school mass with special guest Sister Anne, who is the current Senior Australian of the Year and has

had a lot to do with the Tiwi islands living on Bathurst Island for over 60 years.

After the mass, we went on a bus trip with the Tiwi Girls to "Taracumbi Falls" which is a beautiful waterfall on the island. The girls taught us more about their culture and where to find clay in the waterfall. They also showed us some of their traditional dances. We then had a massive clay fight in the water.



On Thursday we went fishing at South Beach with a couple of students and staff. Later in the evening we went to the community dinner, this is where all the Tiwi staff and students come together to socialise. A few of us joined in with a soccer game, which was fun but very competitive. On Friday, we said goodbye to all the students and staff and none of us wanted to leave.

Overall it was such an amazing and once in a life time experience. I will never forget this trip and all the friends we made in Tiwi islands. It was a great opportunity and I'm really thankful I was a part of it all! A huge thankyou to Ms Blythman for allowing this program to go ahead as well as Miss Cox and Ms Morrison for putting up with us throughout the trip. When the trip comes around again, I suggest you considering applying.

IZZI VAUGHAN

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ST ALOYSIUS COLLEGE, ADELAIDE IN RECOGNITION OF OUR FRIENDSHIP

As part of the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award five St Aloysius College students, Alana Matalone, Violet Croall, Jenna McClure, Sophie King and Caitlin Robinson along with Ms Butterworth and Mr Brown travelled to the Tiwi Islands, Darwin.

The students assisted in the local Primary and Pre-school, as well as helping Sr Anne Gardiner with various projects and presented donations from the SAC community. Their fundraising will be put

towards future projects for the Tiwi community. They also presented Sr Anne with a shield that represents the connection between the Tiwi community and SAC, '*In recognition of our friendship*', that will be placed in the Tiwi museum.

Ms Alan Brown

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD COORDINATOR



11,390 CANS! AN OUTSTANDING EFFORT

The Annual SAC Can Drive was held on Friday 25 August. It was a wonderful, colourful day with each class working hard to collect as many cans as possible for the Adelaide Day Centre.

This year St Aloysius College continued with the format of Primary and Secondary classes combining to make can sculptures. They used the theme from book week "Escape to Everywhere". Students created some fantastic sculptures in the Redden Centre.



SAC has a long history of supporting the Day Centre, which is coordinated by Sr Janet Mead, a Sister of Mercy and a former teacher at SAC. There are also a number of old scholars who work at the Day Centre.

Overall the school collected the most cans in the 20 – year history of this event – an amazing 11,390 cans. This was an outstanding effort! Adelaide Day Centre greatly appreciated the efforts of the whole school. Last year the Day Centre fed 25,000 people. The cans donated by the students are a major contributor to their soup kitchen and foodparcels.

SEEDLINGS

On Monday 14 August, some Year 4 students joined up with Ms Kotsionis and Ms Boylan. We headed over to the plant seedbeds next to the auditorium. Firstly, Ms Priest split the class into two groups. The first group went on the playground while the second group were planting some of the small seedlings such as strawberries, flowers and herbs. Afterwards we chose what plants we were going to plant. We carefully dug a small 10cm hole then gently placed the seedlings into the dirt. After that we covered the dirt on top of the plants, watered them and then it was time for the next group to do the same. With all of last season's rain, we did not need to water the plants at all. We are keeping a very close eye on their progress. Once they are grown, the herbs will be used by the Adelaide Day Centre in their cooking for people inneed.

Thanks to Ms Boylan, Ms Kotsion is and the Green JAM group for purchasing the seedlings, glovesand watering cans forus.

Lara Spokes & Leila Young 4NP



SISTER NICOLE VISITS YEAR 7 STUDENTS

On 12 September 2017, Sr Nicole came to see the Year 7 sat St Aloysius College. She came all the way from Melbourne to Adelaide so she could talk to the Year 7 about her work with the young people in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan.



In Sudan, a civil war is occurring between the two parts of the country. This means that everyone there is in danger and fox holes are needed for safety. People in the Nuba Mountains have been called 'insects' or 'animals' their whole lives and do not realise that they are human beings with rights.

In the Nuba Mountains, Sr Nicole makes hanging mobiles with the children and delivers the mobiles to the Mother of Mercy Hospital to give to the sick and injured patients. Most of these patients are recovering because of the war. To improve the education at the Nuba Mountains, teachers are trained and scholarships are offered to women. Up to more than 90 students are in a class and to them, every pencil and notebook are precious. Sr Nicole talked to the Year 7s about how mercy means relationships, action and now.

Sr Nicole and others have been working in the Nuba Mountains to help improve the education and life there. She does this for the common good because people in Sudan aren't treated fairly. She is giving these people an education so that they can use it to teach others or share their views with the world. She also collects money in different ways, like selling calendars. She brings the money to Sudan to buy school supplies, give teachers more money and start up more schools.

She shared her experience over the years enthusiastically and she was extremely kind to all of us. We learned about her experience through images, slideshows and songs. Her talk to the Year 7s was sad, amusing and moving. We have learnt so much about life in the Nuba Mountains and not to take our education for granted.

Cruz Choe 7TN, Lily Zada-Schwarz 7SS & Lynelle Cheung 7SS

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ST PATRICKS COLLEGE TOWNSVILLE ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Former St Patrick's College student, Dr Tammie Matson, visited the school on Friday 13th October as guest speaker for the Women's Career Network.



Graduating in 1994, Tammie was preparing to study law when a trip to Zimbabwe with her father made her change her mind. She fell in love with Africa and returned home determined to make zoology and wildlife conservation her career. To a young girl from North Queensland in the early '90s, a career in this field was not common, nor was it easy for her family and friends to understand her change of mind. Tammie laughs that her life was so safe and sheltered, she didn't know there were people in the world who were not Catholic!

Gaining her PhD in Zoology and becoming a published author by the age of 25 was only the start of Tammie's amazing and adventurous career that has seen her work throughout Africa and Asia for wildlife conservation, particularly with elephants. Tammie has also worked for the World Wide Fund for Nature in Sydney, leading the nationally threatened species program, becoming a voice for threatened species world-wide. In 2012 she co-founded the *Let Elephants by Elephants* campaign in South East Asia, raising awareness of the connection between the poaching of elephants in Africa and the demand for ivory in Asia.

Today Tammie lives in Cairns with her husband Andy, (co-founder of *Earth Hour*) and two young sons. The couple run Matson & Ridley Safaris in Africa, with Tammie leading the groups as a guide and conservation educator.

The Women's Career Network is a program that brings together past students and current senior students, helping them to make industry connections and form mentorships at business breakfast events. Tammie's presentation to her alumni, some of her former teachers and an eager group of senior students was warm and engaging, leaving the audience wanting to hear more of her adventures.

For more information on Tammie's career, her books, her professional speaking and safaris, visit www.tammiematson.com

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"THE START-UP"



15 girls at St Patrick's College will be the first to undertake the "Start Up" in 2018.

Designed as a two year program, The Start Up is aimed at developing a futures-focused skill set involving design thinking, entrepreneurship and philanthropy. This elective subject will commence in 2018 for Year 9, and will run for two years. Interested students must apply for the program.

Principal of St Patrick's College, Ms Paulina Skerman said the program is about developing young entrepreneurs, driven by the desire to make the world a better place. "The Start-Up will provide the students with an intensive program of skill-development over two years, including contribution from industry," said Ms Skerman.

Students will be required to research and identify a need and create a strategic business solution. At the end of the two years, they will present their commercial project to a panel. Guest presenters from industry will work with the students throughout the program.

"The girls have already started to conceptualise ideas for projects which are quite wonderful. We are thrilled with the level of consideration they have already given to this program, and if this is just the beginning, then the finished projects in two years' time will be incredible."

Ms Skerman said the program will draw on multi-disciplinary areas and develop skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, time management and a strong work ethic. "Importantly, the program will also draw upon personal values such as empathy, compassion, optimism and a desire to make the world a better place through entrepreneurship.

“The concepts that the girls are already considering show an incredible insight into their views of our world, the needs that exist and possible solutions to contribute to these needs. It is exciting and we can’t wait to see the outcomes of our young entrepreneurs.

“This is an innovative way of using education and industry to create a specific skill-set that will result in market-ready solutions for real-world needs,” said Ms Skerman.

“We are about preparing our girls for the real world, giving them the skills to live fulfilled, purposeful lives of mercy and action.”

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AMSSA Staff Conference

August 8 – 10 2019

Monte Sant’Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney

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