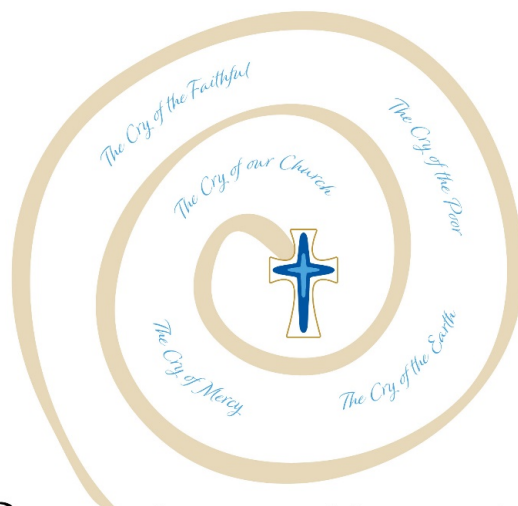




SAVE THE DATE



Speaking the silence

AMSSA CONFERENCE

SYDNEY NEW SOUTH WALES

8 - 10 AUGUST 2019

AMSSA Report September 2018

Welcome to the AMSSA September newsletter. Thank you to the schools who have contributed articles and photos for the newsletter.

As I write this Report, it is less than two weeks away from the AMSSA Student Conference which will be held in Perth. No doubt there will be many excited students and staff who are preparing for their journey to Perth. The Perth organisers have been working very hard to ensure an excellent conference which will engage and challenge the young people from our Mercy schools.

Planning is well underway for the next AMSSA Staff Conference which will be held in Sydney at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney from August 8 – 10 2019. The theme of the Conference is "Speaking the silence". Please note the Save the Date flyer above which is printed for your information.

I wish you well for the remainder of the term and for a relaxing and refreshing holiday break.

Catherine McAuley Westmead Explores Indigenous Culture

Catherine McAuley Westmead welcomed over three days at the end of Term 2 a team of Indigenous educators from Wandana to help the school community explore Indigenous culture. Wandana is a community based project that aims to foster respect for all through an Indigenous Art project. The project aims to leave a legacy of the community today while recognising those who have come before us to lay the foundations and the Sisters of Mercy and the House of Mercy features in the school artwork.



The three days at the school began with a smoking ceremony on Wednesday, 27th June 2018, with the whole school gathering to be apart of this ancient custom among Indigenous Australians and which was led by Catherine McAuley's own Indigenous students.



Students and staff then participated in talks, meditations and art activities with the theme of NAIDOC Week 2018 'Because of Her, We Can' a focus. The culmination of the three days was a school painting that all staff and students had contributed to and which was presented to the school community at a special assembly at the conclusion of the week.



The Catherine McAuley Westmead school painting is a contemporary Aboriginal painting that captures the true essence of the school community. At the centre can be seen the red concentric circles to represent a meeting place of the local Dharug people. The white dots around the meeting place are the ancestors of the past.

The Catholic cross can be seen flowing through the school community and inside the meeting place is a house to depict the 'House of Mercy' in Dublin, Ireland. This meeting place also represents the school and the large U shapes in different colours represent the Aboriginal Elders of the local area. The coloured bands show the seven school Houses and running through the painting is the Parramatta River to represent the Burramattagal Aboriginal people, a clan of Dharug who occupied the area for over 60,000 years.

Below the meeting place is the Aboriginal coolamon, a woman's wooden bowl of many purposes and which pays homage to Aboriginal women with the 2018 NAIDOC theme 'Because of her, we can'. The many colourful dots radiating through the school House areas are the students, teachers and families of the school and the handprint of the School Principal represents the love and guidance by the Principal over the entire school community.

Students commented that they found the Wandana Project worthwhile in assisting them in understanding Aboriginal culture and the symbolism found in the art and language of the local Dharug people. "I liked how the school artwork connected us as a community with the dots representing all the members within our school community", said Aiswaryalakshmi Rajeev, Year 12. "The Wandana Project allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture as I was granted the opportunity to explore various artefacts, learn about different signs and symbols and participate in meditation to help enrich my knowledge", said Chantelle Cortez Maglalang, Year 11.

The school will hang the Catherine McAuley school painting on the school grounds for all to see and enjoy.

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Catherine McAuley Westmead Holds a 'Homelessness Awareness Week'

Catherine McAuley Westmead held a 'Homelessness Awareness Week' recently as part of a campaign by its Student Social Justice Leaders to raise awareness of the over 105,000 Australians who are homeless on any given night.



The Student Leaders launched the Week at a school assembly where they reminded the school community that homelessness is not a choice and instead a variety of factors can contribute such as mental illness, family violence, relationship breakdowns and issues with drugs and alcohol.

As part of the Homelessness Awareness Week the school ran awareness raising campaigns, cupcake stalls, a lolly jar guessing competition, busking in the school grounds at lunchtimes and held a collection drive to collect small non-perishable items to be given out to homeless in the area via the St Vincent de Paul Vinnies Van.

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Catherine McAuley Westmead Presents Cheque For Over \$3000 to Mercy Works

Catherine McAuley Westmead presented a cheque for over \$3000 to Mercy Works at a school assembly held in August with all money raised going to Mercy Works for a sensory garden project at an indigenous pre-school in Alice Springs.



Each Term a different House takes the lead on the fundraising efforts for that Term and during Term 2 it was the school's Coolock and Ryan Houses who organised the fundraising. The money was raised via a number of fundraising initiatives including bake sales, pizza lunches, a Mother's Day stall and a lip sync battle competition.

Mr Kingsley Edwards, Donor Development Manager, Mercy Works, accepted the cheque from the Student Leaders of Ryan House.

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Damascus Student Shows Creativity to Publish Children's Book

Damascus College Year 7 student Sienna Cooke was inspired by her second cousin Imogen Davies Polar Bear story, and worked hard to bring her story to life, in the form of a children's book.



This book 'The Polar Bear Story' was published earlier this year and was recently launched during Book Week on Tuesday 21st August at the Maryborough Library.

At the tender age of five Imogen, Sienna's cousin, asked her Nana to knit her a teddy bear, but instead a polar bear was knitted and with the help of Sienna to create the story, 'The Polar Bear Story' book was formed.

Sienna said that she wanted to help her cousin to create the book, so she took photos of the knitted polar bears and worked hard to design and create the book.

"My cousin Imogen was aged five at the time, she couldn't read or write, so she dictated the story to my Great Aunt Val, and I then helped to compile and print the book," she said.

Sienna said that she really enjoys life as a Damascus College student, and her favourite subjects are PE, English and French.

"The work at secondary school is much more of a challenge than Primary School, and I really enjoy being challenged. Everyone is really nice at Damascus which makes it a great place to be."

The book is available to purchase at Katescastle Book Emporium through Facebook or at the store located at High St Maryborough.

Mercy College Coburg Embarks On Mercy Tree Day

On the 30th of July, Mercy College staff and students joined at our Jubilee Garden to celebrate National Tree Day! This event tied perfectly with our school's theme for 2018 of Mercy for our Earth, so what better way to celebrate it than to plant trees on our very own school grounds.



In preparation for this event, the Seeds of Justice group discussed the type of trees and shrubs we would like to plant. The plants that were suggested were:

- Aloe Vera – because it is a healing plant and can be seen to die off but then comes back to life, therefore it is a symbol of the resurrection.
- Olive trees – as they represent the countries where some of our students are from, but also because the olive branch is a symbol of peace and reconciliation.
- Eucalyptus trees – as they are native to Australia and are considered a sacred tree in the Aboriginal community. Eucalyptus trees represent the division between heaven and earth and burning eucalyptus leaves in a traditional smoking ceremony takes away negative energy.

We started the ceremony by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we met, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation,

and paid our respects to Elders past, present and future. Staff and students then reflected upon our theme of the year through a meaningful prayer and a poem read by the Social Justice team.

After this refreshing start, the air filled with excitement as we headed towards the planting areas. With the help of Carolina, our amazing gardener, we started digging the holes where we would be putting our trees. After much struggle, because we were all learning how to use a shovel, we finally finished digging the holes and put the saplings inside.

There was a great feeling of accomplishment as everyone enjoyed working together towards a common goal. Many students remarked on what a pleasure it was to do something physical in the earth and to take joy from God's creation in a different way. After we put the soil back in and packed it around our newly planted trees, we were left with a beautiful sight, a sapling that was ready to blossom into a marvellous tree over time.

The sight of these young trees inspired us to think about the journey we too will make as students of Mercy College Coburg. A tree needs many things in order to become strong and firm. Like these trees we will be pushed to grow, tested by all kinds of weather and nourished by what we surround ourselves with. It gave us a great feeling of pride and accomplishment to think that something we had planted during our time as students of Mercy College would still be there for many years to come and would be noticed and admired by those who saw it on a daily basis.

In the end, students went back to their classes feeling proud and inspired, knowing that we had made a positive contribution to the environment. It was a real example of Mercy for our Earth in action, living out the values of Laudato Si by caring for our common home and trying to make it better for future generations.

By Mina Kiryo, Social Justice Leader, Year 10, Mercy College Coburg

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OLMC Parramatta's 2018 Women in Leadership Forum

Four inspirational forum speakers have been announced as panellists at the second annual OLMC Women in Leadership Forum on Wednesday August 29, 2018 in the Ailsa Mackinnon Community Centre at Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta.



Marina Go, Chair of Wests Tigers NRL Club and New South Wales Supreme Court Judge Justice Julia Loneragan will be joined by the Captain of the AFL GWS Giants Amanda Farrugia and Restaurateur, Carol Salloum on a panel which will explore perspectives on women in leadership and discuss how each of us can boldly expand beyond what we know we can be.

Mercy Girls and their families will be joined by alumnae of the College, current students, staff and the broader community for this special event which will see speakers each share their stories before joining the conversation through a Q&A session.

Principal (Acting) Marie Wood says she is looking forward to hearing the stories of such diverse women and hearing how they have recognised opportunities and grown from them: "My hope is that, in sharing these stories, it will inspire our young women to be confident and positive in their engagement with the world."

Panellist Amanda Farrugia, who is also an OLMC ex-student and current PDHPE teacher, is looking forward to sharing insights about her leadership journey: "I want to enable students and all attendees to gain an insight into the demands and expectations of leadership in the broader world, the challenges of leading a team in a new sporting venture (particularly in a traditionally male dominated sport) and the challenges women face in balancing sport, work and other commitments."

Newly appointed Head Girl for 2018/2019 Sophie Brown says the Forum is a wonderful initiative that provides young women with lots of insightful information: "Hearing the stories of strong, confident women ignites in us the courage and belief that we can all be woman of leadership in our own way."

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St Aloysius College Adelaide

When we look around at the vast array of Social Justice activities taking place at SAC, the call in Sunday's gospel to believe that "all would be fed, despite it seeming impossible", is certainly being heard and responded to by our staff and students.



During the first fortnight of Term 3, SAC students delivered 'blankets of love' to the Adelaide Day Centre, groceries to the Mercy House of Welcome and bins filled with warm winter clothes to Vinnies. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of so many families in the SAC community who heed the call to share what they have, and in doing so provide students with a critical experience of making a difference in the lives of others.

Last term for Refugee Week, classes began collecting emergency items to donate to the Mercy House of Welcome. These items included long life milk, rice, toothpaste, deodorant, tea and coffee, hair brushes and soap. Our aim was to make up emergency packs for Australian

refugees who arrived at the centre without basic food and sanitary items. This week, the JAM group collected all these items and packed them into boxes and bags.

The Year 12 Integrated Learning class then visited the Mercy House of Welcome to donate the supplies, along with letters and origami hearts with written messages of welcome from SAC students.



Staff at the Mercy House of Welcome said that today's donation has been the biggest they had ever received. It was heart-warming to have worked hard collecting these items at school, then to finally see them go to a destination where they are essential in making life easier for many refugees.

Ms Clare Peterson & Kamila Stansfield-Labrin
Social Justice Coordinator & Integrated Learning Student

Refugee Week

It is always time to reflect on what Australia can do to further protect those fleeing persecution and ensure that those refugees in our own communities can live with dignity and hope.



This year, The SAC JAM team ran an appeal for the Mercy House of Welcome. Last term, at lunchtimes, students from our JAM group helped teach other students how to make origami hearts; over 200 of these had messages of welcome written on them, ready to be received by refugees at the Mercy House of Welcome. Home classes also collected emergency and sanitary items throughout the last weeks of term, for bundles which were also sent to the Mercy House of Welcome in support.

SAC ALWAYS SAYS WELCOME!

Ms Clare Peterson
Social Justice Coordinator

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St Mary's College Auckland – KBB Music Festival Success

In the second week of August, the St Mary's College Music Department took part in the KBB Music Festival at Holy Trinity Cathedral. The festival is always a highlight of Auckland's musical calendar. Our students performed admirably, with a real sense of joy and

commitment in their playing. Of our three groups who performed, the St. Mary's Chamber Orchestra and Senior Orchestra received Gold Awards, and the Concert Band received a Silver Award. The Chamber Orchestra was also one of four groups in their category to be selected to perform at the Gala Concert. Notably, this is our first-ever Gold Award from KBB for the Senior Orchestra, which is a testament to their hard work and dedication. A special congratulations to Jane Wright, Director of Orchestras, for her efforts in preparing this group.



The judges wrote that the Concert Band delivered, "a delightful program which highlights the marvellous work you have done. Your ensemble is very aligned rhythmically, with acute attention to rhythmic groupings across the sections."

The Chamber Orchestra had "Great musical playing – open and communicative. Such a beautiful sound and consistent musicianship. Please play a longer program next time!" The judges gave the ensemble impressive marks of 14/15 for Presentation and 22/25 for Musicianship.



The Orchestra performed an “expertly prepared program” which was “a real pleasure to listen to. Brass and winds play as one sound – excellent tone and balance. String sections unified in approach.” The orchestra was nominated for “Best Performance of a Romantic Work” for Tchaikovsky’s Waltz of the Flowers, and “Outstanding Soloist” for Year 13 Antonia Grant’s violin solo on Monti’s Czardas.

We wish to congratulate all students and teachers for their hard work throughout the year preparing for the festival. This was a great representation of the musical efforts and achievements of St. Mary’s College students.



Rachel Snelling, Head of Department Instrumental Music and Ben Zilber, Head of Department Academic Music

ABOUT THE KBB MUSIC FESTIVAL

Since 1983, the KBB Music Festival has been showcasing the best in secondary school orchestras, concert bands and stage bands in Auckland. From the small numbers in the original Auckland Secondary Schools Band and Orchestra Festival, the KBB Music Festival has now grown to see over 130 groups taking part from more than 50 schools across the greater Auckland region.

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AMSSA Staff Conference

August 8 – 10 2019

Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney

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