Roger, Jaclyn and her son Josiah, together at the enrolment interview for Josiah, the first third generation student.
Young Men and Year 12

“I wished I’d worked harder!” were the words my son uttered to me after a gruelling Year 12, 3 years ago. I had hoped that he would have avoided that sinking feeling of regret. But there is only so much, as a parent, that we can do to steer our children away from what we can see lies ahead, if they continue along a certain path...

This first child of ours did not study hard enough during his Year 12. His thoughts, dreams, imaginations, passions and emotions were elsewhere. They were not harnessed or reigned in and he was not focussed on the task at hand. And there was nothing we could do to dramatically change that.

We prayed, gently nudged, encouraged, tried to push a bit harder, supported, listened and shared, loved, cared and tried to keep our eyes on the big picture... but nothing worked, in so far as us being able to flick on the switch for him. He didn’t have that light bulb moment of, “You know what... it would really be in my interest if I tried my absolute best this year and studied hard for these next few months”. That just didn’t happen.

So at the end of the year, when my son rang through his ATAR score to me, I shouldn’t have been surprised, but I was. It was so much lower than we had hoped for. The pain in his voice was almost too much to bear. He was holidaying with a group of special friends, who were all from an Asian background. Their results were very, very high. Caleb was gutted and I had a reaction which was surprisingly strong. I am usually an even tempered person but I broke down in Amanda Steele’s office and I am sure she will never forget that... poor thing!

Ever since Caleb was a toddler, I had continually heard the words, “He’s a bright boy”. It began with the infant welfare nurse who marvelled at his early articulation right through his school years, in a Government school then at MECS. In the latter years, it shifted to, “He’s a bright boy but... he needs to work harder”, or, “He has such potential.” I mistakenly thought his brightness would get him through, so that despite his lack of work, it would get him a reasonable final result. Not so.

Caleb said some time after that he didn’t think MECS had been good for him. That made me very sad as I thought that it had been a great place for his education, on many levels, but he just couldn’t see that. I’ll admit, that did make me question our wisdom in sending our kids to this school.

We then had our second son go through the same system, same school, same family environment, but with a very different journey. Micah was self-motivated. He was a magnificently wired individual. He was not where his heart is. He has been out in the world doing his own merit and value which contributes to the shaping of our children and who they are.

Mind you, during Caleb’s year I reflected over my Year 12 and I am ashamed to say that I also didn’t work hard enough. I procrastinated, listened to music, day dreamed, doodled, avoided and left everything till the last minute. And nothing’s changed on that front. So there was only so much I could say to Caleb, without being a world-class hypocrite. And that was actually a good thing because I don’t feel that we criticised him and cut him down at his knees, which would only have made him feel more wretched. It kept me humble.

I have come to learn a very valuable lesson through all of this. Year 12 is not the culmination of 14 years of education. It is not the ‘be all and end all’. It is not why they go through all of the other years. Every school year and stage has its own merit and value which contributes to the shaping of our children and who they are.

Yes, it’s an important year. Yes, we want to see our kids do their best. But if that doesn’t happen, if they aren’t mature enough to work hard, or aren’t wired that way, or are going through some hard times or rebellious times... then that’s okay. It’s not the end of the world. God is a redeemer.

Caleb has spun himself around and had some amazing experiences since Year 12. He has travelled to refugee camps in Thailand, then visited and supported displaced people in the jungles of Burma. He has studied and lived with Youth With a Mission in America and is about to go back to do nine months of intensive bible study. He has lived with the poor in the Dominican Republic and allowed his heart to be broken as he fell in love with the children there.

Caleb even came back to me, after all he had been through, and said that MECS had been good for him, and that it had been character building. My heart did a bit of a dance with relief that he could see the tremendous value in coming to a school such as MECS where so much more is taught than just academic disciplines. Life, in all its colour and diversity is presented in a way that makes these young people hungry for what is of true value.

For the last twelve months he has been home working to raise money to go back to YYWAM and he’s been regularly sending money to the Dominican Republic to pay for a woman to go through university. I love the irony in that.

Caleb could be a mature aged student now, so his ATAR score doesn’t really matter anymore. If he wanted to, he could get into a uni course over here and work towards a degree. But that is not where his heart is. He has been out in the world doing his own kind of degree. And he is safe in the arms of a loving God.

And Micah is applying his great work ethic to his cleaning job, for a gap year. He’s enrolled to do Commerce at Swinburne next year. For now, the money’s rolling in for him and he’s supporting two children through Compassion.

Every school year and stage has its own merit and value which contributes to the shaping of our children and who they are.
Editorial Continued...

And that’s what we want, isn’t it? We want our kids to be givers, carers, influencers, young people of faith, with servant hearts and open eyes to the needs of the world.

Now we just have to get our daughter through Year 12. I suspect that she will be somewhere in between her two brothers. She will probably work harder than Caleb, but not as hard as Micah. So I will be able to say then, that I have experienced the lot with regards to low, middle and high output. It’s good to keep in mind that the ATAR score is not the definition of who our young adults are. It is not going to shape the rest of their lives. And at the end of Year 12, there is always reason for celebration. Either celebrate that they worked hard and did their best or just celebrate that it’s over. And hopefully some incredibly valuable lessons have been learnt that will set them up for a dynamic life.

School Notes from Martin, Principal

A wonderful ‘cover’ story

Today’s newsletter cover tells a story. When MECS opened back in Feb 1973, Roger was in Grade 5. Today he’s a grandfather of little Josiah who’s enrolled in 3 year old Kinder for 2014. The other key identity is Roger and Sandra’s daughter, Jaclyn who attended MECS from Prep to Year 12 (1993-2005). Also Jaclyn’s husband Graeme, who couldn’t be there, was also a student of MECS (Class of 2005). This was our very first third generation enrolment and a moment that needed to be celebrated. It wasn’t a normal enrolment interview as it included cake, reflections, a bible reading and prayer. We’ll tell this story more fully in the next ReConnect.

Congratulations Senior Primaries

The Space Expo held last Friday was a wonderful success and I’ve had lots of appreciative comments from parents. Well done to the whole team. Here’s one parent’s email…

“Just wanted to say how incredibly impressed and proud my husband and I were to attend the Senior Primary Space Expo on Friday night. It was clear that the staff and students had put in a great deal of time and effort showcasing all they had learnt about their assigned planet. The entire evening was very well organised and the highlight surely had to be the Parent Trivia section, where we were pitted against each other to try and test our knowledge of the planets…”

Sad News

We received some very sad news this week. Natalie, past student of MECS (Class of 1991), passed away on Tuesday after a long battle with Crohn’s disease. Natalie was married to Josh, also a past MECS student and Mum to four young children. Please remember her family in your prayers.

Sometimes a feedback message gets heard

You might have caught some of the media storm over a Port Macquarie teacher and mother Ana posting on the Target Facebook page the following message: “Dear Target, could you possibly make a range of clothing for girls 7-14 years that doesn’t make them look like tramps? You have lost me as a customer when buying apparel for my daughter as I don’t want her thinking shorts up her backside are the norm or fashionable.”

Within days 60,000 ‘likes’ showed the raw nerve that had been hit. Target has responded with views that they are listening after the news headline became, “Major retailers are being urged to stop marketing inappropriate clothing at children or risk a boycott by parents after a social media backlash aimed at Target over its range of girls’ clothes.” Target Australia yesterday wrote on Facebook that it was ‘reading and listening’ to all feedback and comments Ana’s letter attracted.

The mother went on to say, “Basically I just wanted to give them feedback, but obviously a lot of people have thought the same thing and didn’t say it,” she said. “I really am hoping they (Target) stop and think about the clothes they are selling to people. It’s not little kids’ clothing. They’re made for teenagers.”

Our Day at Chesterfield Farm

We went on the bus. Peter drove the bus.

We ate morning tea.

We fed some animals. There were donkeys, emus, reindeer, sheep goats and alpacas.

We milked a cow. Her name was Tina and she had a calf inside her. Charlotte and Toby fed some baby lambs.

Bridgette the sheepdog rounded up the sheep.

We had lunch.

We went to the nursery. We saw chicks, rabbits, baby goats and snakes.

Then we went on tractor ride. It was very bumpy.
“Why should my child attend Sport Carnivals?”

When people hear the phrase ‘Sport Carnival’ two thoughts often spring to mind. The first is “Fantastic, a day for all the sporty kids to have a great day and show off their talent” and the second, “Yippee!!! I’m not going to that! I’ll have a day off school!” These two reactions perhaps reveal some underlying beliefs that do not fully reflect what we here at MECS believe.

The first response presents the view that sports days really only benefit ‘sporty’ kids. While yes, sporting achievement is recognised and celebrated through the handing out of ribbons, this is only one part of the events and rationale for the day. A sporting carnival is a fantastic opportunity to showcase student’s gifts and talents in the sporting arena, that they may not get the chance to elsewhere at school. This is a time to delight in the success of others and be inspired by God’s wonderful creation of human beings. It also is a time to learn and enact principles of good sportsmanship, fairness and positive competition. It is a day for students to be involved and physically active, taking part even perhaps when they know that “winning” the event is out of their reach.

This idea of the value of participation was strongly displayed at the recent London Olympics. In an event shrouded in competitiveness, elitism and perhaps inequality, one shining example of the value of having a go and participating was seen. Sarah, one of the first women to ever represent Saudi Arabia at the Olympics, competed in the 800m event in clothing covering her head to toe. While she was more than half a minute behind her nearest competitor (an extremely long way for this event) she received a standing ovation from nearly 80,000 people in the stadium. This was an amazing moment that powerfully showed the potential of sport to bring a sense of togetherness and appreciation, regardless of actually winning the race. I am sure in her eyes, and many others, Sarah was a winner.

This brings us to the second response. By choosing to opt out of sports carnivals and go shopping, watch TV, or even stay at home to do homework, the student is essentially saying “I will only be a part of this community to the extent that it keeps me entertained or meets my needs”. In this community at MECS, by seeking to faithfully reflect the biblical idea of community, we believe we should actively support one another in our successes and strengths, put in the hard yards even when we may feel it is not our cup of tea. When a student puts their own agenda above that of the community it undermines and devalues the collective activity being participated in, just as much as if a student decided they ‘couldn’t be bothered’ to do their part in the Middle School Production. On top of all this is the basic point that a sport day is a normal part of school preparation for these two events!

This is not to say there is not a place for a student to opt out of an activity that doesn’t suit them. This is a right to be respected. But as mentioned above if you choose to do that you have to choose to be part of the community and contribute to it. This is not a case of excuse making. This is about recognising the value of participating and being a part of the thing that we believe has the potential to value all humanity and bring them together.

“Even if your child is hampered by injury, shy of the spotlight, or sport is just no their thing, they too can play a role and contribute to making sports days a wonderful event. Many years of past students have demonstrated how even small things such as dressing up, having a go, creating a cheer squad and helping staff can make a big difference. So, come next Tuesday, the 7-12 Athletics carnival is budding with opportunity, let’s make the most of it!”

Lunchtime Concerts

Last week was a wonderful week for encouraging our musicians and singers at MECS!

The students from our whole school community had the opportunity to perform to fellow musicians in their field (Strings, Piano, Guitar, Bass, Singing) and receive some feedback and encouragement from other teachers of their instrument (including singing). Well done to all the brave students who performed to their peers and family. Look out for more lunchtime concerts like this in the future.

Annora
Music Performance Coordinator
Parents & Friends

Father’s Day Stall
Don’t forget the Father’s Day Stall tomorrow in Pump Room 2. Gifts range from $1-$10. Middle School students are welcome to come and buy at lunch-time.

Shopping Tour – with a difference
This year our shopping tour will be on Sat Nov 10, cost $20 – BYO lunch. Morning and Afternoon Tea provided. Come along and enjoy a day filled with fun, laughter and shopping. Tickets available at the office. See flyer for more info.

Coles Vouchers/ Woolworths Stickers Update
Thanks to those who have returned stickers/vouchers in the last week. Tallies were – Coles 34,553 and Woolworths 33,710. Please do not bring any more to the office as both programs have now finished and the boxes have been removed.

Jen

MECS Notes

Moving On
It is with some sadness that we announce the departure of Debra from our Receptionist role here at MECS. Deb is planning to take up full time study next year in the area of Counselling and/or Psychology. We, of course, are delighted for her to be able to follow her dream of many years and what a wonderful counsellor she will be (and is already – many of us have been privileged to witness her wise counsel). We actually told her that she couldn’t leave… but she was quick to respond that “no one is irreplaceable”. Deb’s last day will be January 11, 2013. I am sure that you will join with us to pray God’s richest blessings for Deb in her studies and future career. On behalf of the whole community, we will miss you Deb.

Parent Seminar - A
Last Thursday night a brave bunch of nearly 30 parents ventured out in the storm to attend our Christian Education Parent Seminar - Evening A. Martin and Gerry gave an overview of how we do things differently at MECS. They talked about how partnership is a two way street between parents and the school. Parents were given the opportunity to make suggestions of things MECS could improve or do better in. These evenings are aimed at parents who are fairly new to the MECS community - but are open to anyone who is interested in finding out more about MECS. The next Seminar is Evening B on Tuesday October 30. I hope to see you there.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer

MECS Kitchen
Please note: the Canteen will be shut during the last week of term so there will be no canteen on Wed 19 Sept (Sheryl on Centre Trip) and Fri 21 Sept (Parent-Teacher Interviews).

Weekly Specials
The Weekly Special this week (Aug 31) is Kitchen Made Fried Rice with Bacon - $4.50
The Weekly Special next week (Sept 5 & 7) is Hot Chicken, Cheese & Mayo Roll - $4.00

New Menu Item - UFO’s
(Chicken UFO pictured)
A soft mini Pita with either
1. Chicken, cheese & mayo - $4.00 or
2. Beef burger with cheese & sauce - $4.00

MS Medieval Monday

Cycle A Medieval Incursion
The students in Cycle A recently had an incursion of Medieval activities which provided rich learning to compliment their CS studies on the Middle Ages. There were four sessions of hands on exploration: Heraldry and Chivalry, Music and Dance, Games, the Vikings and the Normans. A popular activity with the students was the shield wall. Students used shields to form a wall to protect themselves from the onslaught of arrows (tennis balls in this simulation), launched by the enemy. Another favourite was learning about the weapons and the heavy armour worn by knights. It was a memorable day for all.

Alison
MS Teacher
SP Space Expo

Last Friday night the theatrette transformed into the Senior Primary Space Expo. As part of our study on Space, students were divided into small groups and given a planet to research. They were then given table and wall space at the expo to present their information. Displays included models, powerpoint presentations, created computer games, posters, mobiles, quizzes and even a smoke machine. Each of the stalls was colourfully and creatively decorated. All of the tables had facts about their planet displayed in creative ways. Many of the stalls had planet give-aways such as badges, brochures, and lots of samples of different space food (ie lollies!). Some exhibitors held quizzes or raffle draws.

The evening finished with a very noisy ‘parents versus students’ Space Quiz in the gym (students cheering themselves on!).

The parents were blown away by the talent of the children, and I think it is fair to say that the students surpassed their own expectations and even ours. Well done Senior Primaries – VERY impressive work! A big thank you to the parents for coming along to support us.

Mel
SP Teacher

Peter shows MP about Pulleys

Peter was showing us pulleys. He got his quad bike bogged so we used a pulley to get the bike out. Then we pulled it with Sandra on the bike but it wasn’t easy. Next we used a wooden post attached to a metal pole to wind the rope around the post. We turned the post and accidently twisted the metal posts but we sort of pulled the bike out. We got a rope and everyone pulled the rope and we all fell over but we pulled the bike out!

Tahlia

One Monday we went down to the car park and Peter got bogged. We had to get him out by using pulleys. We tied a pulley to a tree but it couldn’t hold the weight so we tried heaps of pulleys. Some of them worked but some of them didn’t. After a while, Gerry came with his car and we used that and it worked. After that we went back to our classrooms. It was interesting.

Ben
VCE Drama Excursion

Last Wednesday Unit 2 Drama students headed off for a day in the city that included a tour of the Arts Centre theatres, lunch at Southgate and a Melbourne Theatre Company performance of *His Girl Friday*. We even fitted in a spot of shopping in our day of culture! We saw the set for the musical *Chess*, marvelled at the size of the State Theatre, watched the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra rehearsing and were shown around the newly renovated Hamer Hall. The play *His Girl Friday* was a ‘screwball comedy’ set in 1930s Chicago. It had lots of crazy comings and goings in a story about the way the press manipulate the truth and exploit people’s misfortunes, a theme that is highly relevant today.

This week the students are back to working on their solo performances which will be presented for friends and family early in Term 4, and, of course, writing an in-depth analysis of the play, which the students anticipate with great delight!

Marlene
Drama Teacher

Interschool Sport

Year 7 & 8 Interschool Football

On Wednesday 15 August a team of footballers journeyed to Dandenong to play a combination of football and water polo, such was the condition of the ground. The boys played a total of 4 matches, coming away with 2 big wins and 2 narrow losses. They performed very well in the conditions, and produced several really good passages of play with good ball movement. The 13 goals scored were spread around amongst the team, and every player made a contribution to the team effort.

Ron
MS Teacher

Year 8 Netball

Another awesome day with our students! Our Year 8 girls had two Netball teams entered in the recent Interschool Round Robin. We had lots of very skilled players in all positions. Some girls could play well in any position. Both teams were in the same draw so they played each other.

Jess and Mia from Year 10 came to help coach for the day and did an excellent job. Belinda and Chloe came and umpired all day – not an enviable job. Thank you so much for helping, girls.

Jess’ team, the Bumblebees, came 4th overall and Mia’s team, the Flowers, came 2nd and only lost one game by 2pts.

The girls learnt many things that can’t be taught in a classroom. It was great to see them learning about teamwork and encouragement of others. Well done.

Anne-Maree
Secondary Sports Coordinator

VCE Netball

They did it! 7 consecutive wins for our girls. This group of Year 12 girls have gone each year to the Interschool netball and come home winners. They are so passionate about their netball and they play so well as a team. Yesterday the winning combination was Taylor, Mandy, Simone, Christine, Bec, Alli and Tara.

Our other team did really well together but only won one game. Some were there to help fill out the team and got a welcome break from studies. Well done to both teams who represented our school so well. Sadly, for some of the girls, this is their last day of Interschool sport - but what a great note to end on.

Anne-Maree
Secondary Sports Coordinator

From the football Umpire.

“Thank You for the opportunity to be involved and able to umpire your Round Robins. The students of your schools are a credit to them and thoroughly enjoy themselves regardless of the skill level. Please pass on my compliments and thanks to all the schools for being represented by such courteous and nice students.”
2012 Term 3 Week 6: 26 AUG - 1 SEP

Thur 30 August
VCE Music Recital 7pm
Dance Lessons for 40th Anniversary Ball 7.30pm Gym

Fri 31 August
Yr 6 Positive Boys and Empowering Girls Fathers Day Stall

2012 Term 3 Week 7: 2 SEP - 8 SEP

Sun 2 September
Fathers Day

Mon 3 - Fri 7 September
MS Special Week

Mon 3 September
Dance Lessons for 40th Anniversary Ball 7.30pm Gym

Tues 4 September
Year 7-12 Tribal Athletics

Thur 6 September
Bandfest 7pm Theatrette
Dance Lessons for 40th Anniversary Ball 7.30pm Gym

Fri 7 September
Yr 6 Positive Boys - Guest Speaker

2012 Term 3 Week 8: 9 SEP - 15 SEP

Mon 10 September
Dance Lessons for 40th Anniversary Ball 7.30pm Gym

Mon 10 - Tues 11 September
SS Parent Teacher Interviews

Tues 11 September
SP Connect Morning Tea 9am in Staffroom

Wed 12 September
Year 6 Mother & Daughter Evening 7pm

Thur 13 September
Yr 9 & 10 Well Being Program
MS Recital 7pm Theatrette
Dance Lessons for 40th Anniversary Ball 7.30pm Gym

Fri 14 September
Yr 6 Positive Boys Billy Cart Races

Sat 15 September
2013 Prep Orientation - Teddy Bears Picnic 12 noon.
Centre Trip Bus Packing 4pm

MECS Kindergarten - A Second 4 Year Old Group?

MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

Wanted for the Year 9 Industry Week

- Material Belts, pants braces, shoe laces, Any sort of material strap.
- Materials and clothes of any type, especially denim and cord.
- Beads, jewellery clasps, thin wire and ribbons.

Please bring your items to the main office tomorrow - Fri 31 August, Thanks.

Full-time Receptionist Position

This position is for a full-time Receptionist commencing on 3 December 2012 for a 3 week training period, followed by a break, then officially starting on 7 January 2013. Applicants should be willing to wholeheartedly join a team implementing a distinctively biblical approach to education.

The Receptionist’s primary task is to facilitate communication through the school office, enable the smooth functioning of the office and support the administrative and educational staff in their roles.

All enquiries to Chris (Office Manager) for an Application Pack. Please do not use the online application method.

This position is not available to overseas applicants.

Applications close 5pm, 10 September, 2012.

House for sale

3 bedroom, bungalow with en-suite, Montrose, walk to shops. Contact Tim Brewster, 0407 824 185.

TV & DVD For Sale

Sony Bravia LED Edge TV 80cm $750
Sony Blu-Ray / DVD Player - $150

Both brand new in box. Both unwanted raffle prizes. All serious offers considered. Contact Tim.

Need Garden Help?

Spring is coming. Does your garden need some attention? Your vegie patch need to be prepared? Some general clean up and removal of weeds? Maybe some drainage or small concreting work?

Pa (the man who maintains and helps the children with the vegies and plants in the MECS Creation Garden) is available to make it happen.

The fee? A donation to a building project by Hopebuilders in Uganda, to the amount you consider is the value of the work completed.

Call John (Pa).

Schoolies Revolution Trivia Night

Sat 15 Sept, 7pm at Truth and Liberation Concern, 265 Canterbury Rd, Bayswater North, $20 per person.

BYO drinks and nibbles. Tea & Coffee provided. Alcohol free event.

Aim: To raise funds to support the 2012 team and their work in Uganda. Schoolies Revolution is a project of Hope Builders International

See Mandy for tickets or call.

For more information visit www.schooliesrevolution.com

MECS Kindergarten - A Second 4 Year Old Group?

Due to the wonderful response to our 4 year old Kindergarten program for 2013 we are closing off enrolments for the first group. We are excited about the possibility of having a second 4 year old group, but we would need 15 more Kindergarten children to make this possible. If you are still considering the MECS Kindergarten program or have family and friends who may be interested please call us in the Community Relations Department. We would love to talk to you about this, answer any questions you may have and send you some brochures and information. A final decision about the second group will be made in the week of October 15.

Nicole and Amanda
Community Relations Officers

NOTICES SENT HOME THIS WEEK
(can also be downloaded from website)

- Positive Boys Photo Letter
- Cycle A PT Interviews
- MP Camp Notice (last week)