Year 9 City Camp

Cameron & Josh enjoying the City Camp experience
Laugh Out Loud Learning - Primary Happenings

MECS Primary has had a great start to the year and once again we have found ourselves blessed to be in such a wonderful environment. In this editorial I would like to share some of our Primary happenings for 2014.

L.O.L.L ‘Laugh Out Loud Learning’ – living in joy
‘This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.’ Psalm 118:24

If you came along to the first Primary GT (Get Together) you will have heard 250 students laughing as they met up with our old friend the MECSican-Angel. Amigos regularly pops into our GTs to help remind us of the way we act and be at MECS Primary. Amigos and his new friend MECSy Poppins (Daniela) reminded us that at MECS we value and celebrate our learning together. This year in the Primary school we are focusing on the celebration and love of learning, hence L.O.L.L (Laugh out Loud Learning). We want our students and staff to enjoy and wonder at the rich diversity of God’s world as they unpack it in their studies. We want students to be excited to work hard and see and celebrate their improvement in Literacy and Numeracy. We want our students to understand what it means to persevere even when things are tough and know the joy in that. We want to read, read, read and develop great skill and a love for reading and writing (Daily Five). We want to have fun, laugh and relax together so that learning is a delight and not a chore. So we invite you to notice L.O.L.L around the school and with your children at home, and if you happen to pass a class and hear a giggle you will know that L.O.L.L is taking place.

Daily Five and Café

What is Daily Five and Café you might be asking your Primary student? Are they getting the kids to eat their Daily Five fruit and veg? Wasn’t that Brainfood? Are they sipping baby cappuccinos in a new school café?

Here is the low down on Daily Five and Café.

Daily Five and Café are a very exciting Literacy venture that the Primary began to undertake last year and have fully adopted this year. It began as a pilot program in Senior Primary in 2013 and quickly snowballed into a whole Primary school approach to reading and writing. It teaches independence and gives children the skills needed to create a lifetime love of reading and writing. It consists of five tasks that are introduced individually. When introduced to each task, the children discuss what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like to engage in the task independently. Then, the children work on building their stamina until they are successful at being independent whilst doing that task. When all five tasks have been introduced and the children are fully engaged in reading and writing activities, the teacher is able to work with small strategy focused groups and confer with children one on one at their point of need and help them set individual goals.

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Daily Five activities are
• read to self
• work on writing
• word work
• listen to reading
• read to someone

Café helps students understand and master different strategies used by successful readers. CAFE is an acronym for Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding vocabulary, and includes goal-setting with students in individual conferences, posting of goals on a whole-class board, developing small group instruction based on groups of students with similar goals, and targeting whole-class instruction based on emerging student needs and fine tuning one on one conferring. Specific teaching into each of these areas helps students grow in their reading and writing. Teachers will also be working with students on behaviour that supports good reading habits, including
• get started right away
• stay in one place
• work quietly
• read the whole time
• increase stamina
• select and read ‘Good Fit’ books.

What is so good about it? Every day students get to do the real ‘nuts and bolts’ of learning to read and write by reading and writing for sustained periods of time with explicit and targeted instruction. We are seeing our students make positive gains in their learning and developing of real stamina and perseverance as they work at their own level. Exciting stuff! Over the coming weeks look for the Daily 5/Café segment in the newsletter so you can learn more about the strategies. For more information visit http://www.thedailycafe.com/public/department105.cfm

Community building

MECS is a great place to join together with families in building community. The start of this school year has been marked by some wonderful activities in the Primary School: the Prep information evening, JP Family night and ‘Grandparents and Special Friends’ day. I am sure you have enjoyed reading accounts of these events in recent newsletters. We greatly value these times to grow in partnership together.

MECS is certainly a rich patchwork of educational life and we look forward to what 2014 will bring as we ‘Seek the Kingdom of God in Education’.

Di
Primary Coordinator
After-school care and holiday programs

As working parents, I know many of us face challenges in picking children up from school and providing care during the holidays. Thanks to those who have communicated with Amanda and Nicole, our Community Relations Officers, in regard to these pressures. As a school we are starting to look at the provision of after-school care and holiday programs that we could offer here at MECS. We have started the process of putting together a proposal for the Board's consideration. We will keep you informed about this issue as the year progresses.

School Photos

Monday saw each class abuzz with the excitement of school photos! Thanks to Cassie Nation and Laura Want for making this process run so smoothly. School photos capture a moment in time when we can stop and celebrate each child and their unique gifts and talents. I’m sure many of you already have a place for the yearly school photo – whether it is on the fridge, or mantel piece at home! Perhaps as you look at this throughout the year you will be encouraged to pray not only for your own child, but all the children that make up this special community.

Induction & Parent Seminars

This week our new staff for 2014, along with some of our Kinder staff met together to complete the second stage of their Certificate of Christian Education. Making sure our new staff members understand some of the important elements of Christian education is an important priority for us. Similarly, we want to bring parents who are new to this community on this journey as well. Tonight is the first of our Parent Seminars for the year and so we look forward to meeting new parents and discussing together ‘What makes MECS tick?’

CEN Executive’s Conference

Next week Gerry and I will be out of the school for most of the week attending the Christian Education National (CEN) Executives’ Conference in Geelong. It is an opportunity for executive leaders from CEN schools all around Australia to not only meet together in fellowship, but also to be across some of the major issues influencing Christian education. Di Emery will be Acting Principal in our absence.

Working Bee

I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the Working Bee this Saturday. It’s a great opportunity to partner with the school in making sure our facilities and resources are well cared for. See you bright and early at 8am!

MECS Notes

Body Image Seminar – Developing Daughters, Supporting Sons

Every year at the Year 8 Inspiring Girls camp, the girls get a great deal of value out of the discussions we have on how the media distorts images of women. The girls are quite surprised that so much effort is made to obliterate reality. One of the ways parents can protect girls from the relentless assault of unreal images is to gather information that generates interesting conversations at home. This workshop would be very helpful for parents of Year 7 and 8 girls, who are interested in raising awareness of this issue at home.

The seminar is on at York on Lilydale, April 8, 7.00pm.


Limited tickets, $30.

Natasha

Student Welfare Officer
Friends of MECS

Prayer Chain

Are you a praying parent who would like to support our school community in this vital way?
E-mail prayer@mecs.vic.edu.au and you will be added to our growing list of praying parents and receive regular e-mails with prayer needs for our community.

Staff First Aid Training

For the past month each Thursday evening a group of intrepid and enthusiastic staff have been updating their First Aid level 2 skills under the expert teaching of our very own Peter Beams (who as well as his many other skills, is a First Aid Trainer!) If you were a fly on the wall you may have seen Ali Coffey expertly bandaging a sprained ankle or Anne-Maree Forbes reviving her “Annie” with strenuous CPR. At MECS we take the duty of care of our students seriously and we encourage our teaching and non-teaching staff to have current first aid training. Every time your child is on an excursion or camp there will always be staff ready and trained to deal with any first aid situations that arise. Isn’t that good to know!

Melinda
First Aid Officer
Interschool Swimming

Nicky Joiner and I took 26 students to the inter-school swimming carnival at Waverley Pool last Wednesday. We also had Tom from Year 5 come along. He got 2nd and 3rd in a number of events. The first event of the day put MECS straight into the lead with Jessica swimming 36.2 sec in the 13 girls 50m freestyle. This was a new record. Well done. Unfortunately we were soon overtaken but still managed to come 4th overall. For those who attended it was a very enjoyable day. Thanks to Mia and Emma for being helpers for the day.

Anne-Maree
Secondary Sports Coordinator

MECS Notes

Primary School Atlases

In previous years, students have purchased an atlas which has lasted them through Primary School and into Middle School. The Middle School will now be using a different atlas, and as a result, Primary students are no longer required to buy an atlas during their Primary years. Instead, Primary students will now have access to class sets of atlases.

Families who had students in Years 3-6 during 2013 are eligible for a reimbursement for school atlases that they have previously purchased, once the atlas has been handed in to a class teacher, in good condition, with the student's name written on the inside. If you have not yet dropped your atlas off and would like to do so in order to receive the reimbursement amount, please hand it in to your current Primary class teacher. If you were in Year 6 last year, and you are not using it in MS classes this year, you can drop your atlas in to the Main Office.

Atlases need to be handed in by Thurs April 3, 2014, as we will begin the process of reimbursing the $20 to your fees account after this date. Please note that the reimbursement is not available as a cash refund. Please ensure you write your name on the inside of the cover. We are only accepting atlases that are in good condition.

Cassie
Receptionist

New iPads for our younger students

30 new iPads will be soon be available for use as learning and teaching tools in the Prep and Junior Primary classrooms. This supports the Primary goal of making learning a joy not a chore.

Amanda
Community Relations Officer
The sounds, smells, tastes and sights of a city can both delight and disgust: traffic, car horns honking, people rushing, coffee, chocolate, perfume, sweat, exhaust fumes, lights, darkness, colour, dirt. Finding a way to “Be still and know that I am God” in the midst of Melbourne is not an easy task.

The city can often be quite a daunting place to visit; issues that exist in our local areas are frequently more visible and condensed in this environment. During Melbourne City Camp the Year 9 students are immersed in a world frequently quite foreign from their day to day lives. Helping the students be aware of both the opportunities for creating community and the challenges of seeking it within a city has been a major goal of our experience.

Questions such as “What role does the church play in Melbourne?”, “What do people worship in Melbourne?” and “Who is included and who is excluded from different spaces in the city?” help the students think more deeply about a variety of issues. Hearing from speakers who are involved in caring for those who are often marginalised helped the students to realise they have the power to make a valuable contribution.

As an adolescent with limited resources it can be challenging to think of realistic ways to make a difference in the life of another person. This year each group of students gave away scarves that had been hand knitted by previous Year 9s. Some groups chose to give a scarf directly to a person in need and other scarves were looped around handrails, statues or branches, ready to be taken. These scarves had a tag attached letting anyone who found one know that it was a gift for anybody who had need and it was given with our love. A particular highlight was hearing from a City of Melbourne volunteer that one of the scarves knitted by MECS students had been taken by a man who sleeps rough on the streets of Melbourne each night. Apparently his face lit up as he wrapped the scarf around his neck and buried his face in the soft wool.

It is an enormous privilege to work with a compassionate group of students who demonstrate a genuine desire to transform the world in which they live. Please pray that the impact of this experience will be long lasting for each of the Year 9 students.

Sue
MS Coordinator

Year 9 City Camp – Student Highlights

• The dinner we had at Mercadante restaurant on Lygon Street with the manager who kept playing tricks on us and trying to scare us.
• Seeing one of the scarves a MECS student had knitted on a statue near Bourke St Mall and then seeing a homeless man wearing the scarf later that day.

Chloe

• Visiting Haighs chocolates
• Going to Evensong at St Paul’s Cathedral and having the person up the front pray for the students and staff from the school.

Emily
Today the Junior Primaries had an Incursion at school. I saw a tarantula. It was hairy. Next we saw a sea star. Finally I got to see a scorpion.

Ashton

I saw a crocodile and I touched it and it felt like leather.

Bram

Today I got to see a sea urchin and a tarantula, a stick insect and a scorpion and a tree frog.

Noah

At the incursion at school I saw a spiny leaf insect. It felt weird. Then the JP's saw a burrowing cockroach. It felt smooth. Finally we saw a rhinoceros beetle. It tickled me.

Nathan

I saw a starfish and it looked very big. It felt slimy and smooth. Starfish have their mouth on their bottom and their bottom is on their head!

Sharni

Today we patted a stick insect and it felt bumpy and delicate and cute. Then we saw an ugly cockroach and its abdomen felt like a smooth pebble and I got to hold a starfish. We saw an ugly spider and a scorpion.

Hannah

We got to pat a frog. It was slimy and wet. I got to hold a crustacean. It was waving!

Kayla

I touched a green tree frog and it felt really slimy. It looked cold. I wonder why it made no noise.

Timothy

I saw a tree frog. I held it. I saw a cockroach and I had fun. I patted it for a long time. I held a crocodile and I had fun! I saw a starfish and I had fun holding it.

Mason

This morning the JP’s went to the PUMP room and saw animals and mini beasts. We saw a sea star and a fresh water crocodile!

Maisie

The rhinoceros beetle looked like a mini rhinoceros. It feels hard. The daddy fights other dads with the horn.

Kip

Today I got to hold a tarantula. Then I went back to the classroom and did some writing. It was fun.

Hayley

I saw a millipede. It felt like hard wood and looks like a ball. It spits yucky honey.

Joshua
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Holiday Movie Days
Discovery Church, Mount Evelyn, will be running two movie days during the upcoming school holidays.
‘Turbo’ Wednesday April 9, 10.30am
Entry is by a gold coin donation. Sausage sizzle and lollies for sale.
89 Monbulk Rd Mount Evelyn.

Topline Cricket
Topline cricket provides training for those who want to improve their skills or just have fun. Topline Cricket Autumn / Winter Membership packages for March 28 –July 31 can be found at www.toplinecricket.com. Our Individual Membership will apply this year to families. 1/31-35 Burgess Road, Bayswater North.

Dance Classes
Classes held at Healesville and Montrose for Tap, Dynamic Dance Connection, Jazz Ballet, Classical Ballet and Movement to music for toddlers. Ages 3 - Adult.

Kindergarten Tee Shirts
Available now from the main office in sizes 2, 4 & 6. $10 each. Each child will receive one on enrolment to MECS Kindergarten, but parents are welcome to purchase more at any time.

Kilsyth Heat Basketball Club
We are currently recruiting players of all ages for our club. New player registration fee $10 for the first season and a loan uniform. We urgently need under 12 boys (11 at 30 June 2014) and under 14 girls (12 or 13 at 30 June 2014). Enquiries to Richard.

Mount Evelyn Tennis Club
Open Day, Sunday March 23 from 10am -3pm. Prizes, Giveaways, BBQ, refreshments. All Welcome. Enquiries.

Next Working Bee
This Saturday 22 March
8.00am-1pm
Morning Tea Provided

Kinder Photo Days
This year, we have a great photography company called Max Amos Photography who will be taking the photos. If you have a child in kinder, please make a note of the relevant kinder photo day in your diary:
Possums: Monday 24 March 9am-12pm
Bluebirds: Tuesday 25 March 9am-12pm
Koalas: Wednesday 26 March 9am-12pm
Rosellas: Thursday 27 March 9am-12pm
Wendy Mason
Early Years Coordinator

Notification deadline is 11am Tuesday on published week. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office

- Grandparents & Special Friends Thankyou (more copies available from the office)