MECS Instrumental Recital takes centre stage

Jenna singing at the first Instrumental Recital for the year.

Production Starts Tonight!
I should begin by stating that the following story is a work of fiction. The events detailed in no way represent anyone living or dead and certainly bear no resemblance to my own children who are both perfectly behaved and have immaculately tidy bedrooms (cough, cough).

A mother gazes lovingly into the angelic face of her sleeping baby. As his lips pucker and cheeks scrunch up to his eyes she ponders the journey so far. Her little one has grown and changed so much in only a couple of months. She imagines the future that lies ahead and begins to dream of the toddler, boy, teen and young man he will become...

Fast forward...

Frantically pushing the shopping trolley up and down the supermarket aisles, the mother begs and pleads for her two year old to stop screaming while she locates all the ingredients needed for tonight’s dinner. “I know I am missing something” she mumbles to herself, “but I can’t think what it is”...

Fast forward...

The artwork shows an intricate weaving of bright colours that are a field of flowers. The boy stands up extra tall as the magnets click into place, clamping the masterpiece to the refrigerator gallery. The mother gently places her arm around his waist, pulls him close and whispers, “It’s beautiful”...

Fast forward...

The ‘floorrobe’ now extends beyond the door and into the hallway. The collection of miscellaneous shoes intermingled with both clean and dirty clothes peaks somewhere within the depths of the room. As nobody has emerged from the den and the terrain changes as often as the sand reshapes the Sahara, nobody is quite sure exactly where the peak is. Even the most far-reaching historical records make no mention of the floor’s existence but the legends declare it is a tangle of odd socks...

Being prepared for every phase of parenting can be quite a daunting task. Each stage has its own joys and challenges and each child their own unique personality. A ‘one size fits all’ approach can be somewhat limiting; techniques that work brilliantly for one child do not necessarily succeed with another. Some teens appear to glide through adolescence without experiencing any significant difficulties whereas others may endure more ups and downs than a roller coaster.

There are numerous ways to engage with adolescents that recognise the unique time of life they are in. As new neuron pathways form, the adolescent brain frequently ‘misfires’ causing behaviour that, while appearing to be irrational, is considered normal for an adolescent - increased conflict with parents, mood volatility, increased negative moods, increased risk taking behaviour, recklessness and sensation seeking.

The physical changes an adolescent has to deal with are as numerous as those of a toddler, except adolescents have the added burden of being socially aware. The various aspects of development do not always happen at the same time so the physical, cognitive and psychological development of a teen may not be equally matched. A student may look like an adult physically but still may be exhibiting behaviours of a child. The desire to fit in with their peers when there is such diversity within each of these areas of development may cause feelings of insecurity and self-doubt. Teens want to be unique, while not being different, and may try on different personalities as they seek to discover their own identity and cope with the differences they perceive between themselves and their peers.

The challenges experienced during this stage of life are significant and even the best of adolescents will make mistakes and fail. They don’t have the years of life experience available to adults to draw on when dealing with these challenges. Allowing them to experience the consequences of failure can turn these challenges into valuable learning opportunities.

Recognising the extra difficulties adolescents face doesn’t excuse inappropriate behaviour, but makes it understandable. Finding the balance between maintaining age-appropriate boundaries and encouraging independence can be extremely difficult. Giving adolescents the freedom to explore their gifts and interests within appropriate boundaries can encourage growth. It is essential for adults to discuss these boundaries with teens and to discipline consistently in order to reinforce them.

Adolescents need people who will take the time to listen to them and seek to understand how they feel. They will frequently need a significant adult other than a parent to help them navigate the adolescent minefield; often uncles, aunts, youth leaders and teachers fill this role.

Understanding that many of an adolescent’s mood swings are a result of hormonal fluctuations and beyond their control enables adults to better time their responses to behavioural issues. Choosing to deal with disciplinary issues when the adolescent is in a calm mood rather than dealing with things in the heat of the moment will generally lead to better outcomes.

During this stage of life the opinion of peers frequently holds more weight than the opinion of parents. It is essential to encourage adolescents to find friends who bring out the best in them and will support them in making wise choices.

Most importantly though is for us to pray for our children, pray for their friends and pray for wisdom in knowing how and when to correct their behaviour. These precious individuals are created in the image of God and are to be loved regardless of their behaviour. The rewards of all the hard work, time and energy invested during the early years will pay off and we can cling to the promise...

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6

Sue
MS Coordinator

"Adolescents need people who will take the time to listen to them and seek to understand how they feel."
Board Meeting

Last week, our Board met and discussed reports in regard to the Parent, Community and Staff portfolios. We are so blessed to have such a healthy school community with many opportunities for parents to partner with us in the education of their children, and a school where staff feel they are making a real difference in the lives of the students and families. We thank the Board for their service to our school community and the diligent way they carry out their responsibilities. Let’s continue to uphold them in prayer as they serve the school in this capacity.

Year 11 Exams

Last week, our Year 11 students sat their mid-year exams. Whilst nerve-wracking for some, it is a good opportunity for them to hone their exam skills in readiness for the end of the year, and in particular, for next year! Congratulations to all our senior students who commit to their studies in such a mature and dedicated fashion.

Cycle A Production

Hopefully you all have your tickets purchased and are excited about the Cycle A production which commences tonight. Beowulf: User Friendly promises to be a great night of fun and entertainment. We are so proud of all our Cycle A students for the way they have worked together this term to bring this production to life. Every aspect - from lighting, set and costume design, ticket sales and of course, the actual performance has been taken on by our students, under the direction of our fabulous Middle School staff. We are really looking forward to it!

Work Experience

From July 14-18, our Year 10 and 11 students will have the opportunity to participate in Work Experience. This gives our senior students a great opportunity to explore a particular vocation, or just gain general experience in the workforce. Students have had to find their own placements and get the paperwork finalised over the last few weeks. We trust this important experience will be another valuable step in the transition process from being a student to a worker.

MECS Matters

As I read last week’s MECS Matters, it was a delight to see so many great photos and contributions from the students about the various activities they had participated in. We are blessed to be part of a learning community where every week our students get to be part of, and experience, such a range of activities. A special thankyou to Heather for capturing these events so beautifully in ‘MECS Matters’ each week. She does a fabulous job putting together our weekly newsletter and making sure it captures the life and spirit of MECS!

Students with Disability

MECS is participating in the Nationally Consistent Data Collection on School Students with Disability trial which is taking place in schools across Australia this year. Under this new process for collecting data, teachers will play a more significant role in identifying disability in individual students, based more closely on the definitions within the Disability Discrimination Act. This is an encouraging sign – the definitions within the act are broader than those that have previously been used to categorise disability, and the process recognises that teachers are in a better position to know the students. It is also likely that this new data will be linked to the Australian government recurrent funding under the Students First funding model. This is a positive trial for MECS to be part of – we need to do whatever we can to encourage the Government to recognise the learning challenges faced by some students, and provide funding to allow every student to thrive.

For MECS, this may mean that students who have learning challenges that were previously not recognised as a disability, may now be, under the broader definitions (outlined below) and will hopefully one day be eligible for some extra funding to assist them, we all want the best for our students and we hope that this trial will assist us in that process. Early next week some parents will receive a letter from MECS indicating that their child’s learning challenge may now be categorised as a disability and therefore fall under this trial. These are positive steps we are taking to support each and every one of our students, regardless of their capabilities. The letter will contain further details.

Listed below is information relating to the definitions within the Disability Discrimination Act.

For the purposes of the Data Collection, disability is defined under the Disability Discrimination Act as:

- Total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions
- The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body
- A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction (eg. Auditory Processing Difficulties, Language Disorder).
- A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement, or that results in disturbed behaviour (eg. ADHD, Autism, Severe Emotional Disorder)

The Act and the Standards also explicitly include a disability, either temporary or permanent, that:

- presently exists
- previously existed but no longer exists
- might exist in the future (including because of genetic predisposition to that disability)
- is imputed to a person

In considering which students would be covered by the Act, schools should include:

- students who have been assessed by a qualified health professional as having a disability but who have previously been assessed by a health professional as having a disability, and who have previously been assessed by a qualified health professional as having a disability but who have previously been assessed by a qualified health professional as having a disability.
- students who have not been assessed by a qualified health professional as having a disability, or whose assessed disability was not previously funded, because:
  a. a funding application was never submitted for the student
  b. the student’s scaled diagnostic scores were not sufficient to meet funding eligibility criteria for that disability
  c. the student’s disability did not attract funding support
  d. students who have not been assessed by a qualified health professional as having a disability, but whom the school believes, based on professional judgement, meet the criteria outlined by the Act.

Students who have not previously been eligible to receive funding, but who would be identified in the data collection process includes, but is not limited to those who:

- experience learning disabilities, such as dyslexia
- are on the Autism Spectrum, but whose scaled scores render them ineligible for funding
- suffer chronic health and physical problems which do not attract funding support*
- possess limited vision, but are not legally blind
- suffer from conductive hearing losses
- have moderate language disorders.

Further information and an opt-out letter will be sent out shortly to those who this is relevant for.

Karissa and Shirley
Education Support Coordinators
As of May 29 we, Year 11 Legal Studies students, turned MECS into MECC (Mount Evelyn Christian Court). Tables were upturned and chairs rearranged to form an ‘identical’ replica of the courtroom layout. The Legal Studies students worked hard to reflect the roles of court personnel, and to preside over their own case. Everyone did a fantastic job of playing their roles, varying from judge, prosecution, defence and everyone in-between. MECC found the accused ‘Christy Archer’ not guilty of both 1st degree murder and hazing of ‘Milan Jackson’, thanks to our voluntary Year 12 students who comprised our jury. The jury had to be patient at times as sometimes even at MECC mistakes were made, e.g. in our speech, in terms of slip ups, give-aways and agreeing when we were not meant to do so. The day was highly successful and we all had a great deal of fun. Come any legal problems at MECS, the MECC will always be happy to help out.

James
Year 11
It was hard to tell who was more excited out of the Preps and the adults when the fire truck came to visit. The Preps took it in turns to sit inside the truck, use the hose and pretend to be fire fighters. In the classroom we learnt about what to do if there is a fire. We practised ‘stop, drop and roll’ as well as ‘get down low and go go go’. The Preps had a great morning.

As you read through this together, you might like to use this as an opportunity to discuss with your children what to do if they are faced with a fire.

Rebekah
Prep Teacher
On Thursday evening June 5, the VCE Music Performance students performed in the Semester 1 Ensemble Recital. The evening is an opportunity to showcase the work that has been going on in instrumental lessons and personal practice. The students are also assessed, as the performances are a part of their coursework. We had the privilege of welcoming four students from Belgrave Heights Christian School and their teacher, Darryl, who performed their assessments as a part of the evening’s program. We are partnering with Belgrave Heights, Plenty Valley Christian College and Northside College this year in the VCE Music program. Congratulations to the students for their performances and the hard work that went into preparing them.

Tim
VCE Music Coordinator

New Parent Dinner

Thank you to the new MECS parents and staff who came along to the dinner on Friday night at Chirnside Country Club. It was lovely to share an evening together, enjoy the company of our new families and meet some staff and Board members in our community. There was lots of chatting and getting to know each other over a delicious dinner in a relaxed atmosphere.

The Primary, Middle and Senior School section coordinators gave a presentation on their section; Phil, Director of Ranges TEC gave a presentation on Ranges TEC and Board Chair, Ian spoke about the role of the Board and the Association. Thank you to Year 11 student Claire and her father Glenn, who entertained us with music.

We look forward to a long and rich partnership with our new families as we journey together in Christian education.

Amanda
Community Relations Officer
Wednesday June 11 saw the first Instrumental Music Recital Showcase for the year and it was a fantastic night. The students’ performances were outstanding and the night was highly entertaining. Well done to every performer - the buzz from the full audience was electric because of the effort and polished performances each of you brought to the night.

The Music Student Leadership team led the evening - setting-up, stage-managing and being the MCs for the evening. What an outstanding job they did. I would like to thank them for their willingness to give 100%. Thanks also to the instrumental teachers for preparing and supporting not just their own students but for being willing to help and accompany other students as well. We are blessed to have such a talented and giving group of teachers.

Thanks also to Narelle for supporting the evening and the administration staff assisting wherever they saw a need, to Peter, Karen and Pip for helping create such a beautiful evening. The students saw your support and felt very special because of your efforts. And finally, thanks goes to the parents, families and friends who support our students in their music and for being our audience for the night.

Jodie
Instrumental Music Coordinator
**Holiday Movie Days**

Discovery Church, Mount Evelyn, will be running two movie days upcoming in the school holidays.

*‘Frozen’ Wednesday July 2, 10:30am*

*‘Lego Movie’ Wednesday July 9, 10:30am*

Entry is by a gold coin donation. Sausage sizzle and lollies for sale. 89 Monbulk Rd Mount Evelyn.

**Yarra Valley Holiday Activities**

For lots of ideas for activities to do with your children during the holiday see experienceyarravalley.com.au experienceyarravalley.com.au

**Burrinja Holiday Activities**

These include the shows ‘Wombat Stew - The Musical’, ‘The Fairy Show’ and ‘Swamp Juice’ as well as the Burrinja Circus Festival which includes a skills workshop. For more ideas, details and bookings see www.burrinja.org.au.

**MECS Holiday Fun**

Mount Evelyn Community House holiday activities, $10 a head.

**Chilled out cooking** - Tues July 1, 10.30-11.30, Primary children.

**Rock Star Boot Camp.** - Mon July 7, 6-8 years old 1.00pm -2.10pm and 9-12 years old 2.30pm -3.40pm.

**Calling All Lego Fans** - Wed July 2, 10.30am-12.30pm, Primary children.

For details or bookings contact Mount Evelyn Community House.

**Holiday Activities**

**Pottery 4 Kids** (5-12 years), Mooroolbark Community Centre, 10-11am on Mon June 30, Mon July 7 and Wed July 9. $12 at venue or $6 ERL/Online*. Create a garden ornament while learning basic techniques.

**Stained Glass** (5-9 years), Mooroolbark Community Centre, 10-11am on Wed July 2, Lilydale Library Thu July 3, Montrose Town Centre Tue July 8, Mooroolbark Library Thu July 10. $12 at venue or $6 ERL/Online. Create a stained glass window with tissue paper and cellophane.

**Foil Art** (10-14 years), Mooroolbark Community Centre, 1-2pm on Wed July 2, $12 at venue or $6 ERL/Online. Create your own design.

**Oz Opera - Cinderella,** Mooroolbark Community Centre, 11am and 1.30pm on Fri July 4, $8 at venue or $5 ERL/Online.

**Showko,** Montrose Tow Centre, 11am, Tues July 1, $8 at venue or $5 ERL/Online.

**Swamp Juice,** A shadow puppet comedy, about one man's romp through a swamp. Tickets: $15 or $12 for Group 4+. 55 minutes, no interval. Suitable for ages 7+. *ERL = Eastern Regional Libraries

More info and events at ach.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/ach/WhatsOn/Workshops_Seminars and also at www.culturetracks.info.

**Free to good home**

1 x Green Budgie (Male)
1 x Yellow Budgie (Female)
1 x Cockatiel (Male)

**For sale:** Large aviary $150. Contact Brenda.

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**LEM Phonics training opportunity for MECS Parents**

Are you interested in receiving professional Education training at a discounted price?

Are you looking for a way to assist your Primary aged child in their literacy learning?

Are you a parent helper at MECS?

Are you wanting to have a better understanding of a key Literacy program taught throughout MECS primary?

Please don't miss out on a very exciting, once-off opportunity for school parents to receive professional training in the LEM Phonics Literacy program. This is an exclusive offer. The training runs for 3 consecutive days - Thur 17 - Sat 19 July at MECS.

Please see MECS website for more details!

(On the front page under Updates)