14 August 2014

Kindergarten Visited by Farm Friends

Israel from the 3 yr old Kindergarten enjoys getting to pat some farm animals
Are you a good map reader?

1. The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.
3. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.
4. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world...

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, giving joy to the heart.

Psalm 19 - NIV

I’ve always been fascinated by maps; not just for their practical usefulness but for the way they reflect cultural and social beliefs and values. Most maps betray the ethnocentricity of their makers. Early Chinese maps showed China as the centre of the world. Contemporary Australian atlases have Australia on the front page. For environmentalists, all maps ought to show forests; for an urban geographer a map should indicate population distributions. Maps indicate what is important to us!

There’s a fascinating story about E.F. Schumacher, the noted Christian economist. He visited St Petersburg when it was still under communist rule and named Leningrad. He was walking along with a map of Leningrad in his hand, but in spite of the map he realised he was lost. What he saw on the paper just didn’t match what was before his eyes. In front of him were several huge Russian Orthodox churches, unmistakable with their golden onion domes. Yet they weren’t on the map. He was certain what street he was on, but the map didn’t make sense.

‘Ah’, said the tourist guide, who was with him, trying to be helpful, ‘that’s simple; we don’t show churches on our maps’.

The paper map reflected the mental map of communist life where faith and religion were not an official part of the ideological landscape. The quality of a map makes all the difference between finding a place and getting lost; the difference between seeing the important sights and missing out on the really interesting places.

Psalm 19 suggests that there are two ‘maps’ that are essential for a fulfilling journey through life – the World and the Word; Creation and the Bible; General Revelation and Special Revelation. The task of the Christian school is to help students explore, study and understand and act on both.

‘The heavens declare the glory of God’ says the Psalmist. ‘Earth’s crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God’ proclaims the poet. Most of us have stood on some spectacular mountain range, seen the intricate beauty of a flower, observed the funny antics of animals in the zoo and exclaimed how awesome is the God who made it all.

In education, we have a wonderful array of ‘maps’ by which to study God’s world.

We also need the ‘map’ of God’s Word and especially Jesus, the ‘Word made flesh’. It is the Word that refreshes, instructs, energises and provides clarity of insight.

The Psalmist and Poet remind us that the maps of General Revelation are not always easy to understand and many people are unimpressed even by burning bushes. Even if dazzled with the most beautiful sunset they fail to recognise the Creator. We also need the ‘map’ of God’s Word and especially Jesus, the ‘Word made flesh’. It is the Word that refreshes, instructs, energises and provides clarity of insight.

What we attempt to do in Christian education is to generate a dynamic and creative engagement between God’s world, as explored in the various knowledge disciplines, and the Word of God as we find it in the Bible and in God’s supreme revelation, Jesus Christ.

As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, ‘God has been addressing people in different ways for centuries. Recently he spoke to us directly through His Son. By His Son, God created the world in the beginning and it will all belong to the Son in the end. This Son perfectly mirrors God, and he’s stamped with God’s nature. He holds everything together by what He says - powerful words!’ (The Message)

Narelle
MECS Principal
**Kinder Matters**

One of the highlights of this year has been becoming involved in the life of a Kindergarten. Last week, I was able to visit the 3 year old groups during their Farm incursion. It was lovely to see the children interact with the rabbits, lambs, ducks and other assorted farm animals. To see their shy hesitation replaced with a smile as they petted and fed the animals or sat with them on their laps was great to see and illustrated the importance of these early learning experiences. I look forward to joining the 4 year old groups next week as they head off to the Kew Traffic School! The Kinder staff are to be commended for the extra effort that goes into making these activities possible.

Getting my head around Kindergarten compliance requirements has also been a steep-learning-curve! Part of my education will continue this week when I attend a briefing for Principals of schools operating Kindergartens. Conducted by the DEECD, the briefing will outline requirements under the National Quality Framework. From what I know already, can I assure you that we have a fabulous Kinder? When I survey the number of areas that require specific procedures and protocols, and then compare them with what our Kinder has in place to meet them; as a school community we can be very proud of our facility and program.

**Camping Opportunities for our Secondary Students**

Preparations are well underway for the next series of Secondary School Camps. In particular, the Year 10 Centre Trip is looming on the horizon. Students depart on Sunday, September 14 at 5.30am in the morning! We know from the many students that have passed through this school that the Centre Trip is a formative experience for all, indeed a highlight of their education here at MECS for many! Living in tight community for so many days is a learning experience in itself, but a real appreciation and empathy for the issues surrounding indigenous people and their culture has a lasting impact. We pray that this will be so for our Year 10 students again this year.

**Assistant Principal Primary**

Elsewhere in this edition of MECS Matters, you will see the announcement of Di as the first of our Assistant Principals. Congratulations to Di on this appointment. Di is an outstanding educator and we look forward to her joining the Executive team.

**SP Poetry Incursion**

Is poetry just for people in love and old people? Some Senior Primary students thought so - until this term. We’ve been doing a poetry unit exploring just what poetry is and how we can write it. Many of the students have been pleasantly surprised... they’ve found it's actually fun and interesting! As part of our unit we had a visit from Cameron, a performance poet who recited some of his poems for the students and taught us great stuff about writing poetry. Here are some examples of what we produced during the workshop.

*Melissa*

Assistant Primary Coordinator & Senior Primary Coordinator

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**Croissant**

An early morning I look out the window. The moon is a toasty golden croissant left in the midst of a cold oven. If only I could grab it and eat it whole.

*Harry*

**Moon**

Tucking my little brother into bed The moon dazzles like his eyes And his eyelashes are like the stars I feel so blessed for the moon and for my little brother.

*Jade*

**Orbit**

The moon orbits the Earth like the hands spinning on a clock The Earth orbits the sun like a dancer’s graceful twirl

*Lili*

**Refugees**

Had to run away told not to stay - refugees

*Eliza*

**Waste**

Too much paper what a caper - waste.

*Jonathan*
August Board Report

The Board was privileged to meet together last Tuesday evening. We opened the meeting reflecting on our differences - but more importantly, the unity we have in Christ! After committing our discussions to God in prayer we heard from our Principal, Narelle, who updated us on the success of the work break and the whole school assembly - amongst other things. It was great to hear of the increased student involvement in the assemblies and their willingness to contribute.

The Board Infrastructure report was discussed - we were pleased to note that the key areas of Infrastructure planning, economic constraints, maintenance of buildings, OHS considerations and environmental management are being adhered to; with the exception of improvements required to address some overly hot classrooms in summer - actions are being put in place to address this! We are thankful for the work of Gerry, Pete, Steve and Peter (York) in ensuring that our buildings and grounds remain in such good repair and also that we have been able to do some smaller construction projects ‘in-house’ due to Steve’s building experience.

We continued discussions regarding the new Executive structure, (see announcement to the right) and we ask you to pray with us for wisdom in seeking a suitable applicant for the position of Assistant Principal Secondary.

James
On behalf of the Board

Assistant Principal Update

As you may recall, in June the Board announced a change to the MECS Executive leadership structure. The simultaneous change of Principal and resignation of the Deputy Principal at the end 2013 presented the opportunity to evaluate the current structure and assess whether it was still appropriate for MECS – it was a catalyst that provided an opportunity to review why we are doing things the way we are.

This evaluation ascertained that MECS would be better served by having 2 Assistant Principals on the Executive - one representing the Primary School and the other, the Secondary School. This would provide a focus on development and strengthening of our educational program, as well as the introduction of an ongoing and sustainable teacher appraisal and development program.

As the first step in this change, the Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Diane to the position of Assistant Principal Primary, commencing in Term 4.

Many of you will be familiar with Diane who has been faithfully serving in the Primary School for nearly 15 years and from 2009 as Primary School Coordinator.

We are delighted to welcome Diane to the Executive team and look forward to working more closely with her.

We trust you will embrace and support her in her new role.

Please pray for Diane as she prepares to take on this role and for the Board as they seek to fill the position of Assistant Principal Secondary.

Ian
Board Chair

MECS Notes

Cycle B Needs Magazines

During Special Week in Week 6 (25-29 August), Cycle B are making beads out of magazines and would appreciate magazine donations from the MECS community. They can be left at the Office any time before Friday August 22. Thanks.

Duc
CS Teacher

Positive Body Image Event

In Term 2, four students were selected to participate in a ‘Positive Body Image’ seminar and training day. We learnt a lot of helpful things about how to encourage others to feel positive about themselves. We want to share with our school and inspire everyone to support the ‘Healthy Body, Healthy Mind’ seminar and training day. We learnt a lot of helpful things about how to encourage others to feel positive about themselves.

We have had to change the date of our Cook Off day. It will now be on September 1, from 9am - 1pm.

We are delighted to welcome Diane to the Executive team and look forward to working more closely with her.

We hope you can either help out on the day, or donate some of the items listed above to the Community Freezer. We will have a donation box in the Kinder, Prep rooms, Main Office and Senior School Office.

We need the following items:

- Garlic
- Tomatoes
- Tomato Paste
- Mixed Herbs
- Apricot Nectar
- Apricots
- Chicken Stock
- Corn
- Curry Powder
- Beans
- Salt
- Pepper
- Oil

We hope you can either help out on the day, or donate some of the items listed above and support this so we can have a freezer full of meals to bless our families with.

Please contact Amanda or Nicole through the Office or by email.

Nicole
Community Relations Officer

Friends of MECS

Monday September 1 - Cook Off day

Please note - Date Change!

We have had to change the date of our Cook Off day. It will now be on September 1, from 9am - 1pm.

We have 5 different meals we will be cooking: Pasta Sauce, Zucchini Slice, Apricot Chicken, Curried Sausages and Chicken Soup. We are aiming to cook 50 meals that day to fill our Community Freezer. If you are unable to come on the day but would like to contribute we are asking for donations of groceries. We will have a donation box in the Kinder, Prep rooms, Main Office and Senior School Office.

We need the following items:

- Red Lentils
- French Onion Soup
- Rice Noodles
- Self Raising Flour
- UHT Milk
- Plain Flour
- Sultanas
- Mixed Herbs

Also needed are takeaway or foil containers (to freeze meals in).

Sarah, Year 9
K4 Visits Montrose

Last Friday Possum and Koala children boarded the MECS buses to travel all the way to the Montrose shops! We walked through the oval to the shops. Along the way we went on a number hunt, finding numbers and talking about what they were for. We found out that numbers are everywhere, and have very important purposes, like the phone number to the pizza shop! The children have been talking about where they live and learning their address, and of course we all have a number on our letter box! We posted a letter to Mum and Dad (very exciting), however the highlight was playing in the playground afterward! The children were engaged in such rich, hands-on learning with purpose for literacy and numeracy, community connections, learning in a familiar environment (we heard many times, “I’ve been here before!”), travelling together and sharing an experience. Thank you to the Parents and Grandparents who attended - children make more meaningful connections when we have many adults to listen and respond to the children’s countless questions!

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

MECS Notes
Dr Seuss PS Dress-up Day
Tuesday, August 26, 9am

The Primary School is having a dress-up day to celebrate Literacy and Numeracy week. No need for fancy dress-ups, just some:

- bright colours...fun and imagination!
- brightly coloured clothes, zany hairstyles and crazy wigs or glasses!
- stars, spots and stripes!

Please make sure your child comes in some kind of costume, no matter how basic, as dress-up days are always a lot of fun and really add to the atmosphere of the day.

Hunt up your Dr Seuss books and get your child well and truly ‘into the spirit of things’!

The day begins at 9am with a special GT led by SPUDs - parents welcome!
This term the children have been learning about where their food comes from. They have been learning all about the production of flour to make bread, and have made delicious soup from the produce they brought from home.

We have been talking about God being our Provider - giving us plants to grow and animals to look after in order for us to sustain our bodies for growth.

It was very exciting to have Kathleen bring her fascinating young farm animals to visit us on the cold and wet winter Thursday last week.

The children gently patted the animals, learning how to look after the wonderful creatures God has provided.

Lee and Karen
K3 Kindergarten Staff
Playgroup Joins in the Farm Fun

Busy Bees playgroup got to enjoy the animals too!
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Hope for Creation Family Afternoon

Hosted by TEAR Outer East Support (TOES) Group.

Sunday 7 September 2014, 3.30-5.30pm at the Hall of Holy Trinity Anglican Church Upwey, corner Birdwood Ave and Morris Rd, Upwey.

Changing and unpredictable weather patterns are having a real impact on the lives and work of poor communities. Hope for Creation is a movement of Australian Christians committed to prayer and action on climate change.


This will be an interactive event, with stations for learning, prayer and action – all focused on understanding climate justice, encouraging action and participating in interactive learning activities! Come join us as we explore how to respond locally and globally.

Everyone welcome!

If you are able please bring something to share for afternoon tea.

For more information please contact Becca. becca@bcsmallbiz.com

Parenting Seminars

It’s a tough job, but someone’s got to do it!

4 seminars at Lilydale Primary School, Castella Street, Lilydale on Thursdays August 28 to September 18 at 2-3.30pm.

These are free seminars for mums, dads, grandparents & carers of children 2-12 yrs and will explore issues such as social rules, resilience, self control/self discipline, boundaries and carrying through (consistency).

Presented by Parentzone Eastern, a part of Anglicare Victoria.

Bookings essential, contact Julia 97356190 or 0400 866 495.

Music Event Invitation

You and your friends and family are invited to attend a live event recording of 14 of my original songs. It promises to be a night to remember!

Lance Peele Live - Born to Be at TLC, 265 Canterbury Road Bayswater, Saturday August 23. Door opens 7pm, $5 entry.

Find the event on Facebook on the page of Bethany Peele and register to attend, or text me on 0402 024 144 with your name and number of people attending.

Lance Peele

Art Tutoring For All Ages!

Gabby Willmott is an artist and VIT registered art teacher, offering private and group art tutoring for children and adults (including advanced tutoring for VCE students). Classes are taught in her art studio in Mount Evelyn, as well as in Cafés in the local area.

Private tuition: $45 per hour
Group class: $20 per hour

*Prices may vary slightly depending on materials used for different activities.

Contact Gabby for more information- 0410 544 162, artist@gabbywillmott.com

There is an urgent need for CRT Teachers for the Primary School

We are currently seeking urgent applications for Casual Relief Teachers in our Primary Section at MECS.

If you are interested in applying please download the Application Pack and Application Form from the MECS website, employment opportunities section at www.mecs.vic.edu.au.