Year 12 Graduation - a Night of Celebration

Jenny congratulates Aaron Boyle on his graduation
Advent means ‘coming’ or arrival. During the season of Advent we prepare our hearts and minds for remembering the coming of the King. We take time to reflect on God’s great work in sending his son to redeem and restore the world.

What can you do this Advent to prepare your heart to be open to God and to what he might be prompting you to do or say in God’s great story of hope?

December is just around the corner and that means we are racing toward the end of the school year, Christmas and holidays. Does that fill you with panic as you see 2014 slipping away with an endless stream of ‘must dos’ to be done?

As a young Mum I remember sometimes falling into bed exhausted, wondering if I would ever make it to the school holidays and through the Christmas rush. Stress seemed to mount as expectations for attendance at an array of events and pressures to meet family commitments and spend money, built.

When I think back though, I also have wonderful memories of that first weekend in December as we began to talk with our children about the Christmas season.

One of the first things we did together as a family was make an advent wreath. We lived in an old house in Healesville. It was a rambling weatherboard house with beautiful sash windows and mountain ash floors. The garden was filled with shady oaks, liquid ambers, hydrangeas and fruit trees. Our kids loved to make cubbies in that huge old garden and would disappear for hours as they travelled to far away lands on their ‘horses made of trees’. When the first weekend of December hit the children would go out into the garden to gather ivy and greenery and we would shape it into a wreath with five candles in place. It would take centre stage on the kitchen table. It didn’t take much effort and didn’t cost anything, except for the 5 candles (which we reused each year).

As the weeks of Advent went by we would light one candle each week and read the relevant part of the gospel story until on Christmas day all the candles were lit along with the central larger candle reminding us of Jesus’ birth. There is such a strong memory of the joy of sharing that family ritual and of how our children used to look forward to taking it in turns to light the candles, read the bible and say the prayers. We found that the focus would shift from rushing around, from consuming and from the hectic nature of the end of the school year. We were taking time out to welcome God into our home; to be quiet, peaceful, calm and contemplative and share the important things of the season. God was drawing us quietly and gently to think on things above as we allowed the space and time.

Symbols and rituals assist us to draw closer to God and to seek him. They help us to put meaning to concepts and ideas that are difficult for adults, let alone children.

In the first week of Advent the ‘Hope’ candle is lit. This candle reminds us of the hope we have in Christ, of the faithfulness of God and his promises in the Old Testament prophecies to send his son as redeemer of the world.

Our hope comes from God.

“...the Gentiles will hope in him.” May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:12-13)

Hope is so needed in our world today. Perhaps your family could light a candle next week and pray that God’s hope will fill our homes, our school and our world. Perhaps some of the symbolism of the Advent wreath may be able to be used in your family setting. It may look like time out to focus on God’s great story at your evening meal or when you sit down together. It might be prayers at bedtime for younger children or sharing the story of hope with older kids and thinking about their place in that story.

As we enter this time of Advent may your hearts and minds be filled with hope, joy and the wonder of the coming of the King and may HOPE be spread abroad in your homes and families.

If you would like more information on how to use the Advent wreath there are a number of websites you could visit or use the Scripture Union book from the ‘Together with God’ series entitled “Family Ideas for Christmas and Summer” by Merrill Corney.

Blessings,

Di

Assistant Principal - Primary
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Farewell to some Senior School students
Each year a number of students from Years 10 and 11 leave to take up options outside of MECS - whether to move across to Ranges TEC, pursue alternate courses and apprenticeships or commence work. We recently recognised these students in a farewell assembly and morning tea and heard about each student and their contribution to our community. We wish each of these students well as they pursue the calling and gifting God has blessed them with.

Welcome back!
It is with great pleasure that we welcome Jo M back into our MECS community. In 2015, she will be taking on the role of Secondary Education Support Coordinator. Jo brings much experience and passion to this area and we look forward to further consolidation in the way we can support all our students to achieve the best learning outcomes.

Some news regarding Martin H
Many of you may have heard on the ‘grapevine’ that Martin H has recently become aware of some major health concerns. Tests and scans have revealed secondary cancers in his spine. He is undergoing further tests before determining the treatment options. Many in this community know Martin extremely well and I am confident that you will join me in praying for him, Anita and the family at this difficult time. We will keep you updated on his progress as things become clearer over the coming weeks and months.

Year 12 Graduation
Last Friday was the last ‘hurrah’ for our graduating class of 2014. It was a fabulous night of speeches and presentations as each student was acknowledged for the way they had contributed to our school. The parents presented the school with a tree that symbolised the love and nurture that all our staff had sowed into their children’s lives over many years with the hope that they would bear much fruit in the future. It was a lovely gesture that was much appreciated. We also had the opportunity to send them off with our prayers of support and blessing. Congratulations and best wishes to all our graduating students!

Middle School Camps
Our Middle School students with plenty of staff and volunteers in tow set off for their various locations first thing on Monday morning. Cycle A students set off at 7am for Wilson’s Prom, the Year 9s at 8am for Canberra and the last to leave were Cycle B bound for Inverloch. All reports suggest that despite the rain each of the camps have had a fabulous time with plenty of activities and challenges to keep everyone interested and involved. There will be plenty of photos and reports in next week’s newsletter. We pray for their safe return and thank God for the important way these camps contribute to the learning and community here at MECS.

MECS Notes
Orientation Day
Tuesday December 9 is Orientation Day at MECS. All new students starting at MECS in 2015 will spend some time here getting to know their way around the place. Some of these younger students will have a shorter day and get collected by their parents at various times during the day.

Current MECS students will be at school for the normal school hours, and will visit their 2015 year level.

If you have any questions about any arrangements for Orientation Day, please contact the office.

Natasha
School Services Manager
Friends of MECS

Stationery Helpers

Just a reminder that packing days are next Wednesday and Thursday so if you have offered to help we will be packing in the study centre at the Senior School.

If anyone has any time on Friday 28 Nov or Mon 1 Dec to help with unpacking the new stock that has arrived please come to the study centre at any time during those days even if it’s only for a few hours.

Evelyn
Friends of MECS

Volunteer Required - School Wear

We are looking for a volunteer to take over the running of the School Wear facility, starting as soon as possible. This involves maintaining stocks of school wear items, fulfilling orders once a week (approximately 1 hour per school week) and selling items on the 2 stationery pick up days (one in Dec [9am-3pm] and one late January [9am-12pm]), as well as the first week of Term 1, 2015.

Please contact me via the office if you are able to help out the MECS community in this way!

Thank you very much

Natasha
School Services Manager

Wrestling 2014

The 12th year of MECS Olympic-style Wrestling included around 25 weeks of training.

Term 2 saw up to a dozen Year 7 – Year 12 students and 3 teachers join the lifting lunch club. Using low weights and high reps (350 reps/session), it was tough but safe even for younger students. Half participated for their own fitness while half went on to join the wrestling team in Term 3. All improved their strength and endurance.

Term 3 Wrestling started with 45 students ‘giving it a go’ but eventually slimmed down to about a dozen crazy kids who were so tough they don’t mind the pain, and so dedicated they gave up many of their lunchtimes and recesses. Four of these wrestlers competed in the Wrestling Nationals at Victoria University in September. Three were rookies and one was a veteran. All four competed in different age and weight brackets, and came home with 1 gold and 2 silvers. While often outscored, our MECSicans were too tough to pin. We picked up a couple of remarkable pins ourselves. Congratulations to Isaac (pinned one opponent) Hayden (silver medal), Jacob (silver medal and pinned one opponent) and Jasmine (gold medal). They showed excellent sportsmanship, great focus and brave determination. Most importantly, we shared God’s love with Australia’s best wrestlers from many different nationalities and religions. It was also pretty cool to hang our giant MECS banner across one end of the gym again in 2014.

Who says Christians are wimps?

Adam
SS Teacher & Wrestling Coach
Music is a Gift to be Shared

Last Thursday evening the Theatrette came alive with music and song as our third recital for 2014 showcased some of our instrumental students. So many courageous young ones!

Family members in the audience were delighted to witness 16 students from Year 1 through to Year 11 entertain them on the piano, violin, guitar and voice. A Venezuelan member of the audience could attest to the accuracy of the Spanish renditions of two songs sung by vocal students! All the fidgety brothers and sisters stopped in their tracks as soon as the Middle School Band struck up their big sound! We all certainly needed an encore – maybe next time.

As my mum always said, “Music is a gift to be shared”. You bless others when you share your music. Don’t ever hold back when someone asks you to play for them. You never know how it could bring joy to a person’s spirit. Congratulations to all our budding performers. I bet there are more hiding away in the woodwork...

Rachel
Strings teacher
After 13 years of schooling it is finally here...Graduation!

There were tears, tissues and somewhat turbulent emotions as we commissioned and farewelled the Year 12 class of 2014 at Graduation last week. Though there is the excitement of seeing where God will lead the students there is also the inevitable sadness of letting go of the close bonds we have formed over the many years.

This year we also farewelled Cliff and Rosalie, recognising their 15 and 23 years respectively of faithful service to the MECS community. We also offered a hearty, “Congratulations!” to Laura who was offered a full scholarship to study at Avondale College in N.S.W.

It is a long held tradition at MECS that the teachers write a speech about each of the students in their devotions group. It is clearly evident that each of the staff knows their students’ academic capabilities as well as their character and holds a deep desire to see each student used their gifts to respond to God’s love and his plan for them.

In the uncertainty of the future path we all travel on, it is of great comfort to know, as the Psalmist proclaims, “If I rise on wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (Psalm 139: 9-10). We wish the class of 2014 God’s blessing in their future endeavours – that they might know God’s guidance and love as they look to Him in all they do.

Sharon
Year 12 Coordinator
Amanda acknowledged the 25 families whose youngest student was graduating.

Jess

Desley with Narelle

Persis & Isaac present a music item

Bree

Colin with Maddie

Praying for our graduates

Corey

Hash Tag Hannah!

Erika

Luke, Rosalie & Hannah

Natalie
MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES
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Accommodation Needed
Do you have an empty granny flat or house over Jan/Feb?
A family with 2 teen boys (15 & 18) are moving from Tasmania to Kalorama (building their home) and need some simple accommodation from the end of Jan to possibly late Feb while their home is being completed.
Please contact Heather Bradbury on 0447 358 006 if you can help.

Thermomix TM31 For Sale
Excellent condition. Includes all accessories (Veroma, Thermoserve, steam basket, butterfly & spatula). Also included are 6 TM cook books, 2 mini TM cook books and instruction manual.
A fantastic kitchen appliance making healthy eating easy for busy families!
$1,500 (negotiable). Inspections welcome.
Please call Bree on 0432 509 758.

The Drama for Life
Choice Learning & Social Lights Groups
would like to invite all parents/guardians, siblings and grandparents to our end of year live performance to see the fantastic work the children have achieved throughout their time in drama classes.
Our aim has been to empower all students - giving them options and enabling them to choose an alternate path leading to positive results.

Performance details:
Date: Thursday December 11
Time: 10 – 11am
Youngest children will perform first, followed by the older children.
Venue: MECS PUMP room
We look forward to seeing you there!

Dog for Loan
We are heading away from approx Dec 31-Jan 16, and would love someone to mind our dog - a whippet x curly haired retriever, great with kids, and very cute! For more info contact Michelle 0430 229 116.

IKEA desk - free!
This cute little desk is perfect for a bedroom or small space. It is white with a red shelf and legs and comes with a red chair. Dimensions - length 100cm, depth 60cm.
Pick up from Coldstream.
Call Nicole 0400 537 967.

Hot Dog Lunch – Years 5-9
Thursday December 4
Put on by Year 9 Service Elective students to raise money for World Vision, to provide clean water.
Orders with payment (exact money) must be handed in to the main office by Tuesday December 2.
Hot dog $2.50
Soft drink $1.00
Meal deal (2 hot dogs and drink) $5.00

Last Working Bee
Sat 6 Dec, 7am-1pm
BBQ Breakfast

Notices sent home this week and on Website

• World Vision Hot Dog Fundraiser