Finding Your Voice

Jemimah & Britney, taking part in the Drama they wrote. Story page 6.
Building Community

When talking to staff, parents and past students, a common description of MECS is ‘a community’. As a title that is wonderful, but what does a good community look like? We can often find it easier to experience community rather than describe what it is. When describing it, we use examples from our daily lives such as sports teams, families or church. But to capture the right words I turned to those who are always a sure source of simple wisdom: 9 year olds.

When asked what made a good community, they described it in these ways:

“A good community is where you feel accepted for being an individual”

“…where everyone has an important role to play”

“A good community is where you can cry together, mourn together and be ok feeling sad because you have others there to hold you up”

“A good community is like a family who love each other even if they are arguing”.

These ideas were shared in a circle time we held as a class when planning our GT on ‘Community’. The students went on to perform in a play showing examples of this, creating artwork and poetry encapsulating the idea and writing a personal reflection. Each of these were showcased in a class-led GT to the rest of the Primary school. It was as I was sitting in this GT that I was reminded of the blessing it is to be part of the community of MECS - a place where community is demonstrated at every level of the school; where we see God-given individuality celebrated, heart-felt partnerships between parent and teacher in shaping a young person’s life, MECS members upholding each other in times of sadness and celebrating together.

At this school though, we are not naïve enough to think that Community comes naturally; rather it must be worked at, built and nurtured. MECS actively does this and I see this happening in four ways:

Relationships – Fundamentally, no community survives without relationships. God created us to be in relationship with Him and one another and so, in our classes this is imitated. Similarly, teachers and staff members see their role in the context of a right relationship with each other and our students. This perspective impacts how we deal with discipline, when parents and teachers meet together, in our circle times and even our Year 12s buddying with the Prep students. Relationships are at the heart of what, how and why we teach at MECS.

Communication – Communication can either make or break a community and MECS strives to keep communication a two way channel. Instead of information only being sent out via newsletter or email, open communication exists between parents and teachers, teachers and students, and amongst each area of the school. Where there is an issue or breakdown in communication, it is addressed rather than being passed over.

 Gatherings – Amongst staff, daily staff devotions bring the busyness of school life to a single place so that staff can approach their work with the central focus of God and His Word. In turn, devotions within classrooms and section/whole school assemblies allow for the same thing. It is when individuals gather together like this that a picture of community can be seen. In the Primary school calendar, the Grandparents and Special Friends Day is a gathering that shows the extent of the MECS community.

Joy – A necessary factor that also builds community and relationships is joy. I am a firm believer in seeking joy in what you do, teach and who you are to help shape and strengthen the connections you build with others. I am sure many of you have seen the friendships there are amongst the staff and if you are lucky, you may catch that special day during the year when the Primary School teachers have a dress up day and special morning tea to have a good chuckle together. Coming to work at MECS is a joy rather than just a job.

As in family life, there are times of disagreement and challenge in any community. It is the character and commitment of each of its members, working hard at right relationships and holding to the common goal of seeking God in the choices we make together that helps build our MECS community.

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. Romans 12:4-5

So, what is your role in the community of MECS and how are you helping build or nurture it today?

Alistair

MP Cluster Leader

Middle School Showcase Evening

Thursday 27 August 7:30-8.30pm,
(students to arrive by 7.15pm)
Parents meet in the Staffroom
Performing Arts in the Secondary school

Last week it was great to be entertained by the Year 7 & 8 Performing Arts class, as they performed an original production written and directed by our very own Year 8 students, Jemimah and Britney. The cast did a fabulous job bringing this show together. Thanks to Annora for her leadership of this class. Tonight, the Year 9 & 10 Performing Arts class, under the direction of Marlene, have their opportunity to perform for their family and friends. Completely different in style and tone, this show is also a must see! Congratulations to these students and staff for all the hard work that has gone into these productions.

New First Aid procedures for Primary students

Melinda has written before in this newsletter about some of the challenges of looking after our students in the First Aid room, particularly if many of the visitors don’t really need to be there! To better manage this problem, we have introduced a new system for our Primary students. They will now need to collect a ‘pass’ from their teacher or yard-duty teacher before they make their way to the First Aid room. Teachers will then be able to assist or re-direct those students who don’t really have a serious medical concern. We hope this measure will assist Melinda and Heidi in being able to provide excellent care to those who really need it!

Earn and Learn Program

Can I add my endorsement to this program? This is a simple way that you can help our school add to the fabulous resources we already have if you are a Woolworths shopper. It’s pretty simple! Just drop your Woolworths stickers or filled sticker sheets in the box provided at the front office or the Kinder. You can also drop filled sticker sheets at a MECS box provided at Lilydale Woolworths. Our Kindergarten will be the main beneficiary of this initiative this year.

Staff Satisfaction Survey

You will remember at a similar time last year, parents had the opportunity to participate in a Parent Satisfaction Survey. This time it is the staff’s turn. They will be able to reflect on their experiences of being part of the MECS community and provide the leadership team with important feedback. This is part of an ongoing process to make sure that all members of the community have regular opportunities to provide feedback in regards to how the school is travelling. In Term 4, the students will have their say!

Centre Trip Preparations

Preparations for our annual Year 10 Centre Trip are well underway. Students and staff will be departing on Saturday 12 September at 5.30am and enjoying 15 days together as they travel up through the centre of Australia to Alice Springs and then out to the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu. As always, we know that this experience will be a formative one, not only in developing resiliency and maturity, but also in developing a real appreciation and empathy for the issues surrounding indigenous people and their culture. We are proud of our students’ ability to see beyond the stereotypes and wrestle with complex problems as they prepare and embark on this trip. I am excited that I will also be part of the group this year and will get to experience the whole trip for the first time!

FOCUS On... ASD

Once upon a time... wait... have to keep it to 400 max words...

Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD, was relatively unheard of. Thankfully, the increase in knowledge and strong advocacy has enlightened, enriched and educated us.

There have been changes in the definition in the past two years. The DSM 5 (the diagnostic manual used globally to identify a range of conditions) previously had four categories within the definition of ASD. The updated version has only the one ‘label’ – Autism Spectrum Disorder, much to the unease of many, who suggest Asperger’s should be in a category of its own, as a ‘syndrome’, not a ‘disorder’ - there are many stories of people who are ‘Aspie’ and definitely not ‘disordered’, enriching our world and leading satisfying lives.

Some of the questions facing us together as partners in education include:

• To tell (or not) the child?
• To tell (or not) the school?

How to manage the changes in the teenage years?

What about VCE? Will my child be okay? Will they make it through Senior School?

What value is there in identifying? – the good, the bad, and the ugly of a ‘label’.

Here at MECS the overwhelming response to differences is that it’s a ‘different kind of normal’. We talk a lot about stories here... My story, Our story and His story. Different stories, but same school community, and same God. When each story is acknowledged and shared, everyone’s time at MECS is enriched. We even get to write new and exciting chapters about the school experience, hoping with faith that it is a ‘great read’.

Please come and talk to us at Education Support if these are some of your questions. We don’t know all the answers, but we have some great resources available, including for parents of secondary students. Did you know that there’s a secret book of social rules for Aspie teenagers? It’s fascinating! So you see, some stories are waiting to be read, and others to be written.

While the DSM 5 may identify and diagnose, here at MECS we welcome and cherish, seeing each person not as a label, but as one who is created in the image of our Creator Father God, an expression of the infinite variety of His children. We know that yes, we will experience challenges and difficulties and hurts along the way, but they are all part of the journey and story to “live forever after”.

Jo
Secondary Education Support Coordinator

Narelle
MECS Principal

Thursday 20 August 2015   Page 3
Music Notes

Congratulations

A big congratulations to some of our piano students for their recent exam results:

Tammy Grade 5 exam: B+
Brenton Grade 5: A
Alexander Grade 5: A
Naomi Grade 6: B+

Such brilliant results that are well deserved from such hard work!

A big thank you to their teacher Libby for her dedication, skill & guidance.

Jodie
Instrumental Music Coordinator

MECS Notes

Term 3 Parent Teacher Meetings

All parents should have received an email or letter this week with the information required to access PTO, our Parent Teacher Meeting booking website. If you did not, please email Corrie on cris@mecs.vic.edu.au or call the main school office. PTO will open for bookings next Monday, August 24 at 1pm.

The Parent Teacher Meetings are being conducted on the following dates and times in September for all Prep to Year 11 students:

Wed 2 Sept: 3:45-6pm (PS & MS only)
Mon 7 Sept: 3:45-6pm (PS & MS) 3:45-9pm (SS)
Thurs 10 Sept: 3:45-9pm (Prep-11)

Corrie
Admin Support

MobileMuster - Mobile phone recycling

From 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, MECS collected 3.15kg of mobile phones, mobile batteries and accessories. Thank you to everyone who donated towards the collection! By being a part of the MobileMuster program, our school has contributed to the prevention of more than 16,093kg of batteries, including 79kg of cadmium and 263kg of lead from ending up in landfill where they could potentially leach harmful elements into the environment. If you have any old mobile phones, mobile batteries or accessories that you would like to donate for recycling, you can drop them into the collection box located in the foyer of the main office.

Cassie
Receptionist

Friends of MECS

Prayer Chain

Did you know our school has a prayer chain? Did you know that you could play an important role in our school simply by praying for the needs of our teachers, other staff and families? We are all hopeful for our children, for their futures and the directions their lives might take. We are hopeful that they will grow and learn in a loving and supported community. Because my hope rests in our Lord, I am a part of the prayer chain. Please join us as we support the staff and community as a whole in this way. If you’d like to receive weekly emails of prayer and praise for our community please email me at prayer@mecs.vic.edu.au.

Kerrie
Prayer Coordinator

“Think Global and Local” is the theme of our Friends of MECS Father’s Day stall again this year, Friday Sept 4

We will have an exciting range of Fair Trade and locally produced items available for purchase at the Father’s Day stall on Friday 4 Sept. Gifts will range from $2 - $15.

We will have an exciting range of Fair Trade and locally produced items available for purchase at the Father’s Day stall on Friday 4 Sept. Gifts will range from $2 - $15.

Primary school students will be taken by their class teacher to purchase their gifts.

Please have your child’s money in a named envelope; coins or small notes is preferable.

Middle and Senior School students can come to the PUMP Room at lunchtime.

Friends of MECS

Woolies Earn & Learn

Thank you to those families who shop at Woolies and have been collecting the stickers for us. This weekend is Double Sticker Weekend! Customers will get two stickers for every $10 they spend. The more we collect the more educational equipment we can redeem for the Kindergarten. Thankyou for supporting this.

On Tonight!

Mount Evelyn Christian School
YEAR 9 & 10 Performing Arts Students Present

ONLY CHILDREN

By Marlene F Magee

Best Production, Dandenong Ranges Youth One Act Play Festival 2015

Thursday 20 August 7:30pm, MECS Theatrette,
Gate 2 Hawkins Road
$5 Admission, $3 Concession
**Sport News**

### Years 7 and 8 Football

On Monday the Year 7/8 AFL team competed in the inter-school football day at Greaves Reserve in Dandenong. The boys played really well and ended up with a win, a draw and 2 losses. They displayed excellent sportsmanship and worked really well as a team. The team was well captained by Brad and Best on Ground went to Ethan Allen who approached every contest with intensity and took a number of excellent marks. Our team ended up in 4th place out of the 5 teams competing.

Well done boys!

Jason  
*Primary Sport Coordinator*

### Year 7 and 8 Netball

Year 7 Netball came 3rd and Year 8 won all their games and the grand final. Excellent job girls. Special thanks to Bethany Cross and Jenna Damster for being fantastic student coaches.

### Year 9 and 10 Netball

MECS A team came 1st and the B team came 3rd. The Year 10 girls came 4th overall.

Anne-Maree  
*Sport Coordinator*

### VCE Football

The VCE football team along with some Year 9 students to help fill the side, headed out on a bright sunny day to try and win the Inter-school VCE football competition. This has eluded any of the MECS teams since the competition began. This year would be different though, as 9 of our 18 players participate in local footy outside of school with many being champions in their age division. The team bonded well and from the word go, each player out-played their opposition all day. The MECS team won the flag, not dropping a game whilst blitzing their opposition with only five goals being kicked against them for the whole competition.

A big thanks to all the boys who participated with great courage and sportsmanship, representing MECS with excellence.

Luke  
*Secondary Sport Coordinator*

### MECS Notes

**Terminology Change**

The Program Support Group (PSG) will now be known as the Student Support Group (SSG). This is to put the focus on the student, rather than the program. The Student Support Group is a valuable part of our parent/school partnership. The purpose will still be to look at goals and review current learning plans for individual students who receive funded support. Only the name has changed!

Jo & Shirley  
*Education Support Coordinators*

### VCE Netball

On Tuesday we entered two teams in the inter-school Netball tournament. Both teams did really well achieving second and third position. In the Grand Final our MECS team played tremendously well but were defeated by just one point. It was really great to see everyone in friendly competition and supporting each other. Overall it was really enjoyable day.

Jess & Alex  
*Year 11 Students*

### VCE Biology Excursion

Recently the VCE Biology class visited Melbourne University in the city. This was an opportunity to practically experience things we had been learning about in class. This was really helpful and very interesting. After Roger gave us a guided tour of his old university, we got down to work. Firstly we looked at copper tolerant bacteria – but after that was when the fun stuff started! We got to participate in something called gel electrophoresis, a technique that is used to separate DNA molecules. We also were able to examine and anaesthetise real live flies under microscopes. All up the excursion was really good, an awesome day as well as being able to put into practice all our head-knowledge.

Lauren  
*Year 12 Biology student*
Finding Your Voice

It has been a privilege and joy to work with this year’s Year 7/8 Performing Arts students on an original production, ‘Find Your Voice’.

Last Wednesday was the big day of our performances! The cast of 30 did an excellent job at both our Primary School matinee and our evening performance to a full house!

I am so very proud of each and every member of our class and am grateful for all their hard work, commitment and encouragement of each other and the show. Thank you also to all of the parents and staff who supported us and especially to my colleague Nicky. Well done!

Annora
MS Music Teacher

Below are some of the student’s reflections on the show…

Writing this play almost a year ago I can honestly say that I never thought it could ever become something like this. Britney and I as a partnership have found that putting on a production is easier said than done. We feel truly blessed that we were not alone. It has been so amazing observing this play come to life every rehearsal and 30 different people’s ideas adding and improving the performance. The support that we all had as a cast from others made the night even more magical.

Jemimah, Year 8

I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the Middle School Performing Arts production ‘Find Your Voice’. It was a great experience. I felt like I got to know some of the other Year 7 and 8 students a bit better. During the preparation for the performance, it seemed to me (and I’m sure most of the other performers) that we grew a lot closer and learned to trust each other a lot more. In the production, we all had our little groups. And within our groups, we really got to connect a lot more than expected because we all had similar interests and hobbies. This was undoubtedly my highlight for the past semester and a bit.

Hope, Year 8

I enjoyed the attitude around the play because there was a team/helping spirit. I also really enjoyed the performance night where we got to perform all our hard work!

Abbey, Year 8

My highlights from being part of ‘Find Your Voice’

• the feel of community in the cast
• the jokes back stage
• making new friends
• the joy of getting the dance moves and lines right on the night
• the fact that I can tell myself I did lines in a production

Eliza, Year 7

Hope, Tara, Sarah & Millie
Ashlin & Ellie
 Abbey, Alecia & Alexia
Eliza & Ruth
Adam and Luke
Lwendyl
Myuna Ark Incursion

This term our 3 year old kinder class has been learning about God being our Provider. He gives us animals to look after and plants to grow, in order for us to sustain our bodies for growth.

The children have been learning about farming and where our food actually comes from. Whilst making butter from cream, the children were amazed that from milk, we can make butter, cheese, yoghurt and their favourite – ice cream.

Having Kathleen visit us with her delightful animals last Thursday was a very exciting experience for both the Play Group and our 3yold Kinder children. The children used their ‘gentle hands’ to pat the animals, learning how to look after these amazing creatures that God has provided.

Lee and Karen
K3 Kindergarten Staff
Calendar

2015 Term 3 Week 5: 17 - 23 August

Thur 20 August
Year 9/10 Performing Arts Production 7.30pm
Theatrette

2015 Term 3 Week 6: 24 - 30 August

Mon 24 - Fri 28 August
MS Special Week

Mon 24 August
Possums Bring your Bike to Kinder Day

Tues 25 August
MP Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom

Wed 26 August
Koalas Bring your Bike to Kinder Day
Prep Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom
Parent Seminar B 7.30pm Staffroom

Thur 27 August
MS Showcase Evening 7.30pm Staffroom

2015 Term 3 Week 7: 31 Aug - 6 Sept

Mon 31 August
Primary GT 9am PUMP Room run by SPC
Year 10 Basketball

Tues 1 September
Year 11 Biology Excursion to Aquarium

Wed 2 September
PS/MS Parent Teacher Meetings

Thur 3 September
Years 7-12 Tribal Athletics
K4 Dad’s Night 5.30pm Kindergarten

Fri 4 September
Father’s Day Stall

2015 Term 3 Week 8: 7 Sept - 13 Sept

Mon 7 September
Senior Primary HoopTime
Parent Teacher Meetings

Wed 9 September
Middle Primary HoopTime
VCE Music Recital Belgrave Heights CS
Empowering Girls Mother and Daughter night
Staffroom 7.30pm

Thur 10 September
SP Japan Day
Parent Teacher Meetings

Sat 12 September
Centre Trip Departs

MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

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.

Open House Fair Trade
You are invited to an open house at our Dandenong show room. This is an opportunity to see all current stock of our Upcycled Wares and RoyRak jewellery range. These unique products have been created by women from one of the largest slums in Bangkok. In purchasing these products, you will be supporting these women in receiving fair wages and employment opportunities.

2/6-12 Airlie Ave, Dandenong, Thursday August 27, 10am-2pm
For more information contact Eva MacCartney on 0423 575 506 or email handicrafts@unoh.org

Hardy Book Launch
You are warmly invited to attend the launch of a book about Bill and Gwen Hardy, prepared by the Mount Evelyn History Group as thanks to two people who gave deeply and continually to the community for nearly sixty years.

Books will be available at the special launch price of $12 each – after the launch the price will be $15 per copy.

Saturday September 12, 1:30pm, Hardy House, 49 Birmingham Road (the RSL Hall), Mount Evelyn. Light refreshments to follow. All welcome.

Free Bookcase
Free to a good home. Book case with 5 shelves. Height: 1.77 metres, depth: 28cm, width: 59cm. Contact Barb in Mount Evelyn on 9736 1104.

Men’s Netball State Team Selections for 2016
Victorian Men’s Netball League will have trials to select the Victorian Cyclones teams for the 2016 Australian Championships on Sunday 30 August, Saturday 5 September and Sunday 6 September at Banyule Netball Stadium, 2 Somers Ave, Macleod.

Enquiries Karen Wild 0414 542 583 or Grant Crocker 0419 362 620, vnnl.netball@gmail.com. For all details regarding costs and try out times for the various age groups (youngest group - 17 & under) go to www.mensnetballvic.com.au

Kids of Gold Camps
For building self esteem and confidence in kids.
Level 3 Camp Fri 23 - Sun 25 October 2015
Level 1 Camp Fri 12 - Sun 14 February 2016

Open to primary students in Years 4-6 plus 9 year olds in Year 3.
Contact Kids of Gold on 0418 170 027 (Jenny) or 9737 9475 (Gary) or 0415 427 396 (Gary) or www.kidsofgold.org.au

Apples & Pears
The next delivery will be on Friday 28 August. Please hand your order in to the office in an envelope by 10.30am that morning and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed. Varieties available include Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Ladies, Golden Delicious and Green Pears. Bags are 5-6kg and the cost is $10 for apples and $8 for pears.

Cassie Receptionist

1st Mt Evelyn Scout Group
Is your youth looking for something to do? Have you thought about Scouts?
At Scouts we learn new skills, make new friends, play games, challenge ourselves, go camping and have fun!
We are offering 3 free try out sessions.
Joys 6-7 years, Cubs 8-10 years, Scout 10-14 years, Rovers 18-25 years, Venturers 14-17 years, meeting at Mount Evelyn and Montrose Hall. For more information contact Carolyn Murphy 0425 772 623, GL1stMtEvelyn@gmail.com, or visit www.MtEvelynScout.org.au, or visit www.VicSout.com.au.

Seville Fire Brigade
A planning meeting for the Seville CFA 75th Jubilee Celebration scheduled for Nov 2016 will take place on 24 August 2015 at 7.30pm at the Seville Fire Station, to share ideas and hear from the community. Please advise the number attending to Rhiannon, rhiannon.rak@hotmail.com or 0431 889 550 as soon as possible.

Notices sent home this week and on Website

• Wilsons Prom Letter (last week)
• MP Connect Morn Tea Invite (last week)
• 2015 PTO Parent Letter
• Subject Selection Sheet Year 12, 2016
• MS Showcase Evening Notice
• Careers Newsletter no 12, August 17
• Prep Connect Morn Tea Invite (last week)
• Wrestling Notice
• Subject Selection Sheet Year 11, 2016
• First Year 11 Formal letter to Parents
• Wilsons Prom Info Night Power Point
• MP Coranderrk Mission Excursion Notice