Primary Celebration Concert

Tess performing the Indonesian ‘Serenade Dance’ at the Primary Concert. Story page 6.
The Importance of Community

The MECS community has recently been thinking and talking a lot about the proposed expansion of the Primary school. We have many families seeking Christian education at the beginning of their child’s educational journey - a big turnaround from a few years ago when families tended to wait until secondary schooling to pursue Christian education. It is wonderful to think that right from Kindergarten, children can be immersed in an environment where they are nurtured and cared for and where God is central to the educational journey.

MECS has found itself with the challenging situation of how to navigate waiting lists and make Christian education available to those families who deeply desire it. At the recent EGM, the Association voted in favour of an expansion of the Primary School to one additional multi-age class in each Primary section (Prep, JP, MP and SP) over the next five years, and a building program to accommodate the extra classes.

As we contemplate these changes we need to return to the MECS core values, beliefs, vision and mission, and ensure that whatever happens in the next few years reflects that which makes MECS, MECS.

The following reflections remain non-negotiable:

- Our school’s vision to Seek the Kingdom of God in Education must always comes first.
- Maintaining our family - or village - atmosphere where every student is known, loved and belongs. We must never lose the sense of belonging or allow any student to feel like a number in a crowd.
- Buildings must intentionally drive a sense of community and inclusiveness.
- Community with, and for, our parent body must always be nurtured and fostered.
- Teachers work together in teams and buildings should enhance teacher collaboration and sharing.
- Play spaces are vital and need to be carefully and intentionally designed to foster creative, healthy and active play.
- Outdoor learning is to be encouraged and hence buildings should foster connection to exterior landscapes.
- Active Learning is vital to MECS and buildings should allow for learning that is inside, outside, active and engaged and caters for a range of learners and their needs.

At MECS we hold dearly to our belief that every child is unique and individual and that every child needs to belong and learn to connect in meaningful ways with their peers and with their school community.

Not as many as you may think! At MECS we have ‘optimal’ class sizes for which we aim. Currently there are a number of classes, particularly in JP, which are exceeding our optimal class size, largely due to the overwhelming (and unexpected) success of the kindergarten. These children are already attending MECS – it’s not that we are enrolling lots more children. While adding the extra classes will create some additional places for more children in the future, importantly, it will allow us to ‘spread out’ our current students back into class sizes closer to our optimal numbers. In actual figures, the number of students over what we currently have will gradually increase over the next 5 years, taking the size of the primary school from around 265 to 330 by 2020. This means that we can cater for all the families currently on the waiting list, and have a few additional places for new families.

It sounds like the Junior Primary classes are going to be really big in 2016. What will the class sizes actually be? What about the MECS commitment to smaller classes?

JP is the section of the Primary school that is facing ‘over optimal’ numbers next year. When we say ‘over optimal’, we are not talking significantly over: in JP, our optimal class size is 24; the actual class size next year will be a bit higher, with literacy and numeracy classes of 19 or 20. We’re certainly not talking about 30 students in each class!

What happens while my child is in one of those classes that are over the ‘optimal’ number?

If we could have a new classroom built by the start of next year we would! But as that’s impossible, we have recognised the need to put extra supports in place for the slightly larger classes next year. The main concerns of larger class sizes are the potentially reduced pastoral care and effective teaching. Therefore we will have the following things in place:
**SKETCHER’S SCOOP**

**Exciting Times in the Primary School**

This is an exciting edition of the newsletter, because for the first time we are putting out some specific details about our expansion plans in the Primary School. As mentioned previously, the Board and Association have recently endorsed this expansion, and in a number of smaller forums we have made some important announcements about next year and addressed questions. In the editorial this week, we are pleased to bring to the whole community some of the details. Over the coming months, as further plans take shape, we will use various means to make sure our community is fully informed of our plans moving forward. In the meantime, let’s continue to pray and commit this school and every family to God.

More immediately, we want to give thanks for the fabulous Celebration Concert last Friday evening. What a joy to see every Primary student take their part in the evening, through music, dance, drama and poetry! And how great to see so many parents and family members pack out our gym! As expressed on the evening, a big thank-you to all our Primary staff for making the evening so successful, but in particular, Carolyn, our Primary music teacher, and Rachel, our Indonesian teacher, who both did an awesome job. We look forward to this concert becoming a regular part of our Primary school program.

**Frequently Asked Questions continued**

- **3 full time class teachers** to ensure pastoral care is maximised in the larger groups.
- **A fourth Literacy and Numeracy teacher** - Literacy and Numeracy are foundational at JP level and hence we will be having four classes of approximately 20 students for these vital learning areas. We will also have Learning Assistants for strategic support.

**Where will the classes go while the buildings are being built?**

The plan is to transform the Middle School Manual Arts building into classrooms that can be used to house classes while construction occurs progressively over the next 5 years. This will allow us to create a sense of stability as opposed to bringing a portable classroom onto the grounds which would feel temporary and disconnected.

**Won’t it be messy, noisy and potentially dangerous to have builders on site?**

Having building works going on can be messy and inconvenient. As we have always done, we will do our very best to minimise the disruption and maximise safety. We will employ a Project Manager to organise building contractors in such a way as to minimise the impact on the school, and who will intentionally minimise noise and inconvenience and will ensure safety at all times. Of course, there will be a number of children who love having the opportunity to watch the machines at work!

**What will happen after the expansion if there are still waiting lists?**

We believe that this is as much expansion as we could allow without beginning to lose the ‘MECSness’. Once we reach these enrolment numbers, a different alternative will need to be explored (such as another campus).

**How is traffic going to be managed and where will everyone park?**

We have begun discussions with a traffic architect to answer these questions. While we won’t pre-empt the consultant’s advice, some ideas are that we may need to create an additional exit, make alterations to existing parking, or we may even need to park our buses offsite.

Gerry, Di & Natasha

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**After School Care at MECS**

Have you started planning for next year? Are there changes in your family or work life situation that will make school pick ups challenging? Have you considered using the After School Program at MECS? It has been running since the start of Term 2 and is appreciated by both parents and students alike.

If you would like more information you can get an information pack from the office or contact 3C Kids Care directly. You can call June on (03) 8790 3921 or email 3ckidzcare@caseycc.org.au

**Parent Review**

“Our two primary school aged children have utilized the after-school care program at MECS. They have enjoyed the yummy and varied afternoon tea that is provided; imaginative team games; opportunity to colour in huge colouring in sheets and cook; finding affirming notes and pictures from other children and the staff in their ‘me’ bags, and watching a movie whilst munching on popcorn.

As parents, we find the convenience of after school care helpful for our work schedules. The children thoroughly enjoy attending; so much so they usually complain about having to leave! And the program costs us a lot less than we anticipated.”

Some quotes from students...

When I asked Micah about the program and why he likes going, he said “It’s just so much fun.”

When I asked Imogen about the program and why she enjoys attending, she said “We get to do lots of fun games.”
MECS Notes

Peace Poem

Peace is small but it has the potential to be big:
At the moment peace is small
But in the future it will be big.

Peace is like a seed waiting to become a mighty oak.

Peace is like a sponge. We are the water.
The more of us it soaks up, the bigger it gets.

Peace is like a diamond
Small and rare -
But, when found, Beautiful.

Let the acorns of peace be sown across the world
And the mighty oaks stand until the end of time.

One planet, one goal:
Let peace grow.

Destroy the axe of war and let stand the tree of peace.

Let the weeds of war be poisoned
And the flowers of peace bloom in all their glory.

By Matthew SPD

Friends of MECS

Stationery Helpers

Thank you to everyone who has offered to help with the packing and sales of stationery. The roster will be emailed shortly. There is still a need for some more people to help on the following days:

Thurs 3 Dec 9am -12noon (packing)
Tues 8 Dec 12noon - 3pm (sales)
Thurs 28 Jan 8.30am - 12noon (sales)
Thurs 28 Jan 1pm -3pm (pack up)

Help is also needed to unpack the storeroom and move it all to the Senior School on Wed 25 Nov from 9am - 10am.

More help is also needed to unpack all the new stock on Fri 27 Nov and Mon 30 Nov anytime from 9am -3pm in the study centre at the senior school.

If you can help at any of the above days even if it’s only for a few hours please contact me on 0425 821 947.

Evelyn

Interschool Athletics

At the beginning of the day we could have thought we were attending a swimming carnival as we hopped off the bus and jumped the puddles. However, we all soldiered on and the day gradually improved. Unfortunately, High Jump was unable to be run due to safety reasons. We had some excellent individual achievements and efforts but were unable to make a mark as a school team, coming 5th overall.

Special mention to the following students for participating in more than 3 events; Saoirse Boone, Tim Lyddy, Micah Lyddy and Ben Marek. A great effort by these students.

1st places went to:
Bree - 800m & 1500m
Beth - 400m
Savannah - Long Jump
Cooper - Long Jump
Ethan - Shot Put
Saoirse - 400m, 800m and 1500m
Ben - 400m, 1500m & Triple Jump

15 boys relay: Micah, Isaac, Zach, Hayden

Cam Damster- Shot Put for the 4th year in a row!

Thanks so much to teachers Tim for working hard all day as Starter, to Nicky for managing the team and students Tim, Ben and Alexander for helping with duties.

Anne-Maree
Health/PE Teacher/Sport Coordinator
Prepped for Pets

Last week Carolyn from the Responsible Pet Ownership Program came to talk to the children about pet dogs and cats. She spoke to the children about how to keep pets safe, what can go wrong with dogs in the yard and that dogs need things to play with so that they don’t get bored and get into mischief while we are at school.

Importantly, Carolyn taught the children how to read and respond to dogs’ body language, particularly when an unknown dog approaches them. There were four steps to remember: stand very still, hands down, quiet as a mouse, look at the ground. We must always ask the owner before patting the dog and we should never tease or be mean to a dog or other animals.

The discussion ended with some great songs to help the children remember the important rules for dealing with dogs they don’t know.

The gentle white Malamute Millie, had a lovely snooze while the children joined in the very interactive discussion. She came out from her nap to greet the children, letting them practice the things they had just learnt.

Jan
Prep Coordinator/Teacher

Step into Prep

For MECS 4 year old kinder children, ‘stepping into Prep’ is just a short walk up the ramp, while for children from other settings it is a step into a whole new community, both for the children and their parents. Either way, starting school is a big change, and becoming familiar with the places and faces involved helps make the transition smoother.

During our Step into Prep orientation program, it has been lovely to meet our Prep children for next year. During last term, Alison and I visited the children in their kinder groups for us to get to know each other. This term we have had Thursday afternoon get togethers where we have shared stories and songs together on the mat, and the children have played in the Prep classrooms.

While the children were familiarising themselves with the Prep rooms, parents have enjoyed getting to know one another, learning some useful tips and asking questions about their child’s transition into school.

Recently parents joined their children in the classrooms to share a ‘take-home’ book together. Clearly many children were already ‘hooked on books’ as they enjoyed several of the stories on offer. It was wonderful to see the high level of interest from the children, and fun from the parents, as they had this introduction to a new kind of home reading for next year.

We still have some more events lined up to help the children transition - we hope these children enjoy their ‘Step into Prep’ with confidence!

Jan
Prep Coordinator/Teacher
The Primary ‘Celebration Concert’ displayed a wonderful partnership between the disciplines of Music and Indonesian through a combination of English and Indonesian influenced songs, fable stories, dances, poetry, costumes and artwork that came together in worship, language, culture and song.

How wonderful to see so many students embracing new skills, both on and off stage, singing in the choir, playing instruments in ensembles, performing in character, dancing in costume and moving equipment on and off stage. It really was a celebration of the many gifts and talents in our Primary students.

Our Prep students showed how they were learning to embrace the difference between percussive cadence and song in the Indonesian language. The Junior Primary students revealed a collection of different rhythms with instruments and movement to a traditional Indonesian fable story between the Buaya (crocodile) and Kancil (mouse-deer). The Middle Primary students combined skills on Xylophones with cultural Indonesian song and dance.

During the last semester Cameron worked with our Senior Primary students to create a mosaic of performance poetry. The students were outstanding in their delivery of this vast array of challenging poetry. The crowd especially enjoyed the rendition of the 23rd Psalm written by Cameron. The students completed their segment with a poem that they wrote collaboratively with Cameron, expressing our love for God.

The entire audience was united in one voice of worship, displaying the fundamental principle of God’s love, blessing and favour for his people.

Through learning about Indonesian culture and language, students have begun to recognize and understand how their own culture is positioned and gain an increasing appreciation of their own environment, value, experience and privilege.

Many people worked together to make the night successful: a big thankyou to Pete, Steve and the parking team for the parking of vehicles and moving of instruments; Jason for supporting the roadie team to make smooth transitions between performances; staff and parents for supporting the students in their roles; Paul for stepping into the technology role and Michael from ‘Starmist Studios’ for supplying and setting up our audio and lighting requirements.

What a wonderful experience and memory for all involved.

Carolyn & Rachel
Primary Music and Indonesian Teachers
Early Leavers Assembly

Last Friday the Senior School (and a collection of parents) stopped and paused for reflection. But what was the occasion? What would warrant a ‘pause’ during this busy time of year? Our students. More specifically, our ‘Early Leavers’ (students who are leaving us before the end of Year 12).

The assembly was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on 10 students who will be leaving MECS to pursue alternate ‘pathways’: Ranges TEC, TAFE, apprenticeships, work, other schools and even other countries. The Senior School teachers spoke fondly of each student, of their contribution to the school community, and how they will be missed.

It is a rare thing to be able to celebrate and honour these students, and their parents, who under other circumstances might sometimes ‘slip out unnoticed’.

I shared with the students some verses from Colossians 3:16-17.

“Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, let it be as a representative of the Lord Jesus, all the while giving thanks through him to God the Father.”

Our prayer for these students and for all of our students, is that the seed that has hopefully been planted in them through their time at MECS, will continue to grow and flourish. That no matter the ‘pathway’ they have chosen, they will be able to speak fondly of a God who creates, who loves, who saves and who restores and that they will become examples of God’s love wherever he may lead.

Karissa
Assistant Principal - Secondary
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<th>Date</th>
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<td>28 November</td>
<td>Canberra Camp Returns</td>
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<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Kinder Information Night</td>
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<td>26 November</td>
<td>Year 5 IMAX Excursion</td>
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<td>23 November</td>
<td>MS Camp Week</td>
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<td>20 November</td>
<td>Year 12 Graduation</td>
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<td>Primary School Athletics Day</td>
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<td>Evening 7.30pm</td>
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<td>10 November</td>
<td>Step into Prep Information Evening 7.30pm</td>
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<td>11 November</td>
<td>Year 11 Exams</td>
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<td>10 November</td>
<td>MS Connect Morning Tea 9am Staffroom</td>
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<td>9 November</td>
<td>Mondays, Nov 23 to Dec 14, 3.45-5pm</td>
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<td>30 November</td>
<td>Year 11/12 2016 Orientation</td>
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<td>30 November</td>
<td>Year 9 Day Off</td>
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<td>4 December</td>
<td>Prep Big Night Out</td>
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<td>5 December</td>
<td>Working Bee Including Breakfast 7am-1pm</td>
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<td>14 November</td>
<td>Prep Big Night Out</td>
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**MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES**

**Garage Sale**
Bigger than Ben Hur! 9am until 2pm on November 14 at 66 Bailey Road Mount Evelyn.
This is the garage sale hundreds of people have been waiting for. We are moving and it’s time to clear out the collection of treasures. Women and kids clothes, toys, heaps of games, china, bric-a-brac, country curios, stamp collection, shed stuff, bookshelves, coffee table, books, camping stuff, ride-on mower, vintage collectables, 1950s Noritake dinner set, quilting fabric, and heaps more.

Lovers of children’s books take note. There is an enormous collection of kids books on sale (we are talking 1000s of books). Grown ups need not fear we also have books for you too. Pay by the bag-full.

**Montrose CFA Calendar**
The Montrose CFA is fundraising for a new fire-fighting truck by selling a 2016 calendar. It will be sold for $20 from Montrose Meats, IGA Montrose and the Little Flower Shoppe.

**Foster Care Information Session**
More foster carers are desperately needed to help fill the gaps for emergency, respite and long term care situations within your local community. Learn how you can make a difference by attending our next information session on Monday November 23, 7.30pm, 47-51 Castella St, Lilydale. Carers come from all walks of life and can be single, married, older, younger, with or without kids. You can work full time, part time or be at home. For bookings and enquiries call 1300 889 335 or visit www.anglicarevic.org.au/events.

**Cyber Bullying Forum**
November 18, 5.30-7pm at the Life Ministry Auditorium at Oxley College, 15-49 Old Melbourne Road, Chirnside Park. RSVP Jill.Hutchison@aph.gov.au or 9729 0799.

**Twilight Christmas Market**
Friday November 13, 4 - 9pm, Overbeek Lodge, 736 Mount Dandenong Road, Kilsyth.
There will be crafts, gifts, flowers & plants, a huge range of foods to consume and take home, kids activities, oliebollen, poffertjes, sausage sizzle, croquettes, coffee and a special visit from Santa and Sinterklaas.
Start your Christmas shopping!

**Christmas Activities for Kids**
Advent Workshops are open to all children in 4 year old Kinder to Year 6. Come and join the fun with Christmas songs and craft as the Christmas story unfolds over 4 Mondays, Nov 23 to Dec 14, 3.45-5pm; Montrose Uniting Church, Cnr Gratten & Canterbury Rds, Montrose.
$12 per child for 4 weeks pre-registered (by Nov 16) or $4 per child per week.
For more information call Robyn on 9728 3739 or Ann on 9725 3548.

**Apples & Pears**
The next delivery will be Friday November 20. 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.

**Working Bee**
This Saturday 14 November
8am-1pm - Morning Tea Provided

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

- JPRH GT Notice
- Primary Athletics Notice - Date Change
- MS Connect Morning Tea Invitation