Abseiling at Year 8 Camp

Emdwyn smiles after a successful abseil
Owning the Vision

Who do you associate with? Friends, family, like-minded people? The people we hang out with or associate with reflect in some way what we are most passionate about. Hold that thought.

Apart from my role as the Admin Manager at MECS I also ‘wear another hat’. That ‘hat’ is my role as the President of Christian Education National (CEN). CEN is the umbrella body of Christian schools that MECS belongs to, or rather should I say participates in and contributes to. The value of CEN in bringing together and serving around 80 schools across Australia is inestimable. It’s a real privilege to be a part of this organisation (you can check out CEN at www.cen.edu.au).

The legal form of CEN is a company. This company does not have shareholders, rather it has members; these members are not people but rather legally formed organisations. They exist to run schools. In May CEN will be getting together for its annual meeting. Of course legally formed organisations cannot meet unless there are real live humans embodying those organisations. Those organisations are in some sense distinct from the schools that they operate. From my point of view as President of CEN, the health of those organisations is a critical issue to the wellbeing of both CEN and of the schools that they run. This will be a focus of our get together in May.

This brings me back to my observation that who we hang out with somehow reflects our passions, values and aspirations. The legal body that runs MECS is an incorporated association. Around 230 people have formally committed to belong to and participate in the Association. Our challenge is that the notion of formal belonging does not now fit comfortably in Australian culture. Today it seems that people tend to consume rather than participate. My point is that associating with the MECS Association can reflect how very significant you believe Christian education is.

Of course if belonging and participating only means coming to a couple of general meetings each year that perhaps does not seem very important. On face value participation is easier to make sense of in the day to day of school – helping on a school camp, reading in class, working your heart out at a working bee (thanks for that!), plus, plus, plus.

The meaning of belonging to the Association is more subtle. While the Board, Executive, and the wonderful Nicole Nyhouse, endeavour to make the general meetings of the Association interesting and interactive, these meetings are not as critical as we might think. It is our members holding and protecting the vision for what we do at MECS and Ranges TEC that is paramount. The vision of seeking the Kingdom of God in education is one that has to be held in high esteem. Belonging to the Association is about protecting, supporting and promoting that vision (Of course there are some very active ways to participate in the Association through the Board and its sub-committees.)

In the first of our parent seminars I like to use the metaphor of MECS and Ranges TEC as sailing ships ~1800s style trading clippers if you like. It is our Association that is the owner of the sailing ships and therefore decides where they will go. How the ships get there is up to an organisation (MECS), and it is our Association that is like to use the metaphor of MECS and Ranges TEC as sailing ships ~1800s style trading clippers if you like. It is our Association that is the owner of the sailing ships and therefore decides where they will go. How the ships get there is up to an organisation (MECS), and it is our Association that is the owner. The captain and crew (Executive, staff and volunteers) simply sailing in a ship doesn’t make you an owner of the ship, but you can become one by joining our Association. Contact Nicole Nyhouse or one of our Board members to find out how you can become a ‘ship owner’.

Gerry
Administration Manager

VCE Drama

VCE Drama Excursion

Most of our senior students are familiar with the story of the infamous 'Picnic at Hanging Rock', having seen the film in Middle School, but last Tuesday evening the VCE Drama class got to see a new stage adaptation of the novel. In this version, presented by the Malthouse Theatre, five contemporary schoolgirls tell the story and take on the various characters. The performance evoked the landscape through music, sound and storytelling and had some truly dramatic moments that gave some of our students quite a fright! However, I’m happy to report that they recovered during a debrief at Macca’s on the way home!

Marlene
Drama Teacher

Year 11 Legal Studies

Legal Studies Excursion

Last Tuesday our Legal Studies class had the privilege of experiencing the County Court and the Victorian Parliament first hand. Upon arrival at the County Court, we were able to spend half an hour with the judge and his associate, and ask them any questions we had about law, and the court system. We gained real-life insight into what we had been learning about in class, and it was great to hear from someone with lots of experience. We then witnessed the judge carry out an appeal in the courtroom. After we had been to the court and had lunch we visited the Victorian Parliament. A tour guide took us to Question Time of both houses, and gave us lots of information about how the state government conducted its proceedings and law making. Overall it was a great way to experience and witness everything that we had studied in class throughout the term.

Sam
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Parent Seminars

Last week we held the first of our Parent Seminars for the year. We run these evenings to ensure that our new parents are familiar with the visions and purposes of the school and understand the key ideas of Christian education. As in any good partnership we want to make sure that we all share and support these foundational ideas. New parents are required to come to two evenings – one called ‘What makes MECS tick?’ and the other ‘Let’s unpack the jargon around Christian education’. We look forward to seeing other new parents at these seminars as the year goes on.

Principals and Executives Conference

This week, Di and I have been attending Christian Education National’s bi-annual conference for Principals and Senior Executives in Sydney. It is always a great opportunity to meet with other Christian leaders from around Australia who are all committed to seeing Christian schools grow and flourish in this country. There have been a great range of speakers and elective leaders to encourage us in our thinking about some of the challenging issues in society and education at the moment. As always, it is also quite humbling to see what some of our Christian colleagues are doing in much more remote and challenging circumstances than what MECS experiences. It is good to be reminded of our blessed circumstances and the richness of the MECS community in so many ways.

FOCUS On... Supporting Play

In the “Welcome to MECS Primary 2016” video (if you haven’t already, check it out on our Facebook page), Di shared a prayer of the teachers for our students. Part of this said:

May they burn bright with the love of learning, joy in their play, strong in their resilience, and may they be hope-filled.

May they grow in kindness, friendships… be strong and inclusive.

May our playground be filled with laughter and joy.

At MECS, we understand and value the importance of play for our students. We recognise the role of play in developing the physical, social, mental and emotional well-being of each child, and the importance of providing opportunities for all of our students to engage in play that is wonderfully safe and nurturing.

In the same way that children have preferred learning styles, we know that this applies to how children play. We also recognise that for some students, time away from a supportive classroom environment can be tricky to negotiate. So how do we nurture this diversity? In addition to the permanent structures for play such as the oval, basketball nets, down ball courts, the climbing equipment, the MECS Creation Garden (MCG) and our beautiful bush playground, students are supported and encouraged in their play in a number of ways:

**Play pod:** The play pod is a container filled with all sorts of wonderful unstructured materials, such as crates, tyres and boxes. These multiple use materials encourage students to engage in creative, gross motor skill play, make safe choices and manage risks in their activities, and to cooperate with their peers.

**Games cupboards and clubs:** In addition to students being able to borrow play equipment such as bats, balls and skipping ropes, there are also board games, sensory activities (such as kinetic sand), and art materials. Students can access these independently or participate in adult-supervised games or art clubs that occur each lunchtime.

**Quiet Play Room (QPR):** The QPR operates each day during the second half of the lunch break. This supportive environment provides opportunities for identified students to engage in play through small group games and activities. The focus here is on developing student confidence, turn taking, sharing skills and negotiating difficulties with the support of an adult.

Active Games: Active games provides younger students with the opportunity to participate in physical games such as skittles and minimum contact ball games, the focus being on turn taking, fairness, managing boundaries and developing resilience.

Here at MECS, we want to support and nurture the head, heart and hand of each student. Providing supportive and inclusive play opportunities is just one of the ways that this happens.

Steph Learning Assistant

SP Space Expo

It is always great to showcase the learning of our students and see what is going on in our classrooms. Tonight our SP students get to impress their family and friends as they display their posters and models and share their learning of planets in their Space unit at our annual Space Expo. This is a great example of the way in which our students across the school get to bring their learning to life and share it with others in a variety of ways.

Parent Teacher Meetings

During this week and next there are a number of opportunities for you to meet with teachers during our first round of meetings. Teachers and other educational support staff are keen to meet with you to discuss the learning progress and goals of each student. We want these to be positive conversations, so please come ready with your ideas and strategies about how your child could be better supported or extended in each class.

Working Bee

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the Working Bee this Saturday. It’s a great opportunity to partner with the school in making sure our grounds and facilities are well cared for. See you bright and early at 8am for coffee and toast!
MECS Notes

Change of GT Time

The JP Echidna led GT will NOT BE on Monday March 21 due to school photos. It will now be held on Thursday March 24 from 2 - 2.30pm instead. We would love our parents to join us for this special Easter assembly.

School Photo Day - Monday March 21

Detailed information as well as a photo order form envelope have gone home. Optional Family Photo Order forms are available from the Main and Senior School offices. Payment can be made online (for orders via the internet), or by cash, cheque, money order or credit card via the envelope. Family Photos must be ordered using the Family Photo Envelopes or online, and cannot be included with normal photo envelopes. You can order and pay for siblings orders in one envelope if desired. Please return your photo envelope/s by tomorrow Friday 18 March. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office. Envelopes do not need to be returned if you have paid online.

Introductions...

Brit, a Year 9 student is doing a series of interviews to help us get to know some of the teachers at MECS. The first article is on Rachel, our Indonesian teacher...

Introducing Rachel

You may or may not know this lovely lady. If you don’t know her, then this may be your chance, and if you do, this is your chance to know her a little better.

If you were a cake, which cake would you be?

I’d be a orange and almond cake. Not very adventurous, but sweet, nutty and inclusive to those with gluten sensitivities.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies include netball with friends, jogging with friends, and reading alone.

What is your secret indulgence?

Pickles. I regularly have to remind myself that a balanced diet does not include pickles in every meal.

What is one thing you are embarrassed to admit you have never done?

Mowed the lawn (successfully). Tried it once, broke the mower.

What’s the best way to comfort you when you are having a really bad day?

Generally - bring me food and tell me I’m competent!

By Brit
Last week Thursday we had around 320 special visitors in our Primary School. I am not sure who enjoys these days more, the Grandparents and Special Friends, the students, or us staff! The energy of the students is palpable, as they excitedly look out for their visitor/s to arrive. Some of our students who didn’t have a visitor worked very hard as welcoming and helping with the morning tea. The teachers do such a wonderful job in hosting so many extra people in the classrooms and organizing fun activities to do together. A huge thank you to all those Grandparents and Special Friends who came along to MECS for this event - some travelled for hours! We hope you enjoyed the morning. We loved having you visit and look forward to seeing you again next year.

Nicole
Community Relations
Last Wednesday, March 9, we went to the Clifford Park Activity Centre in Wonga Park for Year 7 camp. It was amazing! On the first day we set up our tents which went surprisingly smoothly! That night we had the option to go on a night walk or hang out at the camp site playing card games.

The next day we had rotations which included things like art, drama, archery and the mud course. I think we can speak on behalf of all of Year 7 by saying that the mud course was the highlight of our camp. The mud course included climbing over a log wall and swinging on a rope from one side of a deep mud puddle to the other (which was almost physically impossible to do without landing in the pool of mud and we all looked like mud monsters!). That night we all performed drama acts in our rotation groups.

The next day we competed in the Amazing Race with our teams. It included the Cookie Challenge, Puzzle Solving and a challenge where you have to knock over the skittles using only a stocking on your head with a ball inside of it.

Thanks for reading!

Skye & Greta

All Year 7 students went on camp to Clifford Park. It was a tremendous camp. We did many fun activities, including a muddy challenge course (we got mud everywhere!), abseiling, archery, art, and so much more. We slept in tents. When you go on camp, make sure that you bring a very good tent so it doesn’t get wet inside... you don’t want to end up sleeping in a pool!

Noah & Kyal

Boat Engineering

At after school care last week we made boats! Students have embraced the challenge of creating boats that not only float but can also race. These were made from aluminium foil, straws, popsicle sticks and rubber bands. So far we have only had one group race so we are excited to see the rest of the results this week!

We have more challenges and games planned for this week. It will be jam packed and exciting!

Hayley
3C Kids Care
**Year 8 Camp**

The Year 8s went on camp to Clifford Park last week from Monday to Wednesday. We were lucky enough to have a 38° day on Tuesday and we all felt tired when we went home! On Monday we went on a scenic walk up Mount Lofty and played some fun tribal games run by Duc. On Tuesday we did a range of activities such as abseiling and the challenge course, which is a highlight for many of the students. There is a big mud pit and inevitably some kids come out covered from head to toe! We also got to use the waterslide on Tuesday because it was extremely warm. Overall we were so pleased with how the Year 8s coped and stayed positive throughout the whole camp. They had a fantastic time. Below are some of their thoughts on camp.

**Nicky**  
*Cycle A Coordinator/MS Teacher*

What I enjoyed on Year 8 camp was the mud challenge and the water slide. It was great to spend time with friends.

**Ben Staunton**

On Tuesday we had a very warm 38° day. Because of that, the teachers let us stay up a bit later so it would cool down. We had lots of fun looking at the stars and playing music with Duc.

**Brielle**

We arrived at camp on Monday and set up our tents, which always takes a while! My favourite part of camp was the tribal games where we had a big tarp and we got to slide around on it. It had eggs, flour, dishwashing detergent and a few buckets of water so we could slip and slide. Tuesday was a challenge because of the heat, but overall it was a fun camp.

**Erin**

One of our highlights was the water slide. We got to have fun with the teachers as they splashed us and we splashed them back. It was a good way to cool down on a hot day. We enjoyed the friendly rivalry between the teachers and students on camp.

**Emdwyn & Eliza**

I had a great time hanging out with my friends on camp. It was relaxing to spend time chatting and playing games with them.

**Lachie**

Even though it was a really warm day, I enjoyed the rotation activities we had on Tuesday. We did things like archery, abseiling, the mud course and art. The food was very nice thanks to our wonderful cooks.

**Joel**

I really enjoyed going down the abseiling tower. From the top of the tower there was a nice breeze.

**Abbey**

I enjoyed the challenge course and being with my friends. The food was really delicious.

**Tyler**
**Calendar**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thur 17 March</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Meetings (PS: 3:45-6pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Senior Primary Space Expo 6.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 19 March</td>
<td>JP Mini Beast Dress Up Day Year 7 Immunisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 19 March</td>
<td>Working Bee with Morning Tea 8am-1pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 21 March</td>
<td>School Photo Day Parent Teacher Meetings (PS: 3:45-9pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)</td>
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<td>Tues 22 March</td>
<td>Year 7-12 MECS Athletics Carnival K3 Bluebirds Connect Morning Tea 8.45am Staffroom JP &amp; SP Cartooning Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 23 March</td>
<td>Primary MECS Athletics Carnival (Year 1-6) Year 7 Basketball</td>
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<td>Thur 24 March</td>
<td>Last Day Term 1 Primary Easter GT 2pm PUMP Room JP Echidnas Leading (Kaye)</td>
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<td>Fri 25 March</td>
<td>Good Friday School Closed</td>
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<td>Sun 27 March</td>
<td>Easter Sunday</td>
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<td>Mon 28 March</td>
<td>Easter Monday School Closed</td>
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<td>Sun 3 April</td>
<td>Daylight Savings Time Ends</td>
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**2016 Term 1 Holidays:** 25 Mar - 10 Apr

**2016 Term 1 Week 1:** 7 Mar - 12 Mar

**Next Working Bee This Sat 19 Mar, 8am-1pm with Morning Tea**

**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.

**Twilight in the Park**

Ferntree Gully Community Arts Centre and Library are having a picnic featuring Sean Murphy on Fri March 18, 6-7.30pm. Includes craft, face painting and sing-alongs. BYO picnic and rug and meet at the Rotunda between the windmill and the library. 1010 Burwood Highway, Ferntree Gully. Enquiries 9800 6455.

**Items for Sale**


**Coldstream Auskick**

Register online now at www.aflauskick.com.au/ for Coldstream Auskick, Running from Friday April 15 to Aug 5, 5.30-7.30pm Main Oval Coldstream. Contact Karina 0425 784 193, auskick@yahoo.com.au. Cost $82.

**Apple Man**

The Apple Man is coming tomorrow - Friday March 18 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag and pears $8. Please put the correct money in an envelope with your order written on the front, and hand it into the office before 10.30am on Friday March 18.

**Term 1 Parent Teacher Meetings & SSGs**

Thurs 17 March (PS: 3:45-6pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)
Mon 21 March (PS: 3:45-9pm/ Secondary: 4-9pm)

**Puppet Fun in Foundation**

Last week, John from ‘Don’t Move’ Puppet Theatre, performed ‘Three Animal Stories’ about animals and friendship. This fitted in well with our learning about the creatures God has made, and about getting along with each other. It was also lots of fun!

On such a hot day, the children didn’t mind at all when Blue the fish in the first story did a big sneeze and got everybody wet!

After the three stories, John turned the theatre around and showed the children how it all worked. They saw the rolls of scenery and the microphones and the hooks that held the puppets waiting to be used. He answered the childrens’ questions about the lights, the music (on an iPod plugged into an amplifier). They were curious about where the voices came from, and some were surprised to learn that the different voices all came from John. It was very interesting to see how everything was set up so that John could always have his hands free to operate the puppets. That’s why John wore a head set mic. Ruby and Maddie demonstrated how John could see the audience through a camera, inside the theatre. The children were also amazed to see how small the theatre folded up and how it rolled away!

John also showed the children a little more about how to make puppets. Lots of new vocabulary was heard, not only about the animals, but also about stagecraft and puppetry.

The children were captivated from start to finish, and the ‘Don’t Move’ Puppet Theatre was well named.

Jan
Foundation Coordinator / Teacher

**Notice sent home this week and on Website**


- Working Bee Notice (last week)
- K3 Rosellas Connect Morning Tea Invite
- K3 Bluebirds Connect Morning Tea Invite
- Primary Athletics Day Notice
- Scholastic Book Club letter and How to Order Form for Kinder and Primary