Worawa Debutant Dreaming Ball

See Story Page 5

Letisha is a Ngukurr woman with Jake, MECS; Michelle is a Gija girl from Halls Creek with Armand, Ranges TEC; Justine is a Ngarinyin woman from Derby with Luke, MECS; Stephanie is a Larrikin, Murrum (Morrin) woman from Darwin with Keanu, MECS; Shaniqua is a Jaru woman from Billiluna near Halls Creek with Hayden, Ranges TEC; Shaquille from Alice Springs with Kyle, MDCS; Tiara is a Yankunytjatjara woman from the community of Titjikala with Toby, MECS; Shakira is a Mudburra/Jingili woman with Onesimus, MECS; Melanie is a Murrinh-Patha woman with Jordan, MECS and Nekisha is a Djarbpruynu woman from Elcho Island with Daniel, MECS.
Why Middle School?

Not all schools embrace the model MECS has adopted, so why do we?

Why do we feel it is important to have a unique section that is part of the Secondary School, but dedicated to the adolescent age group?

“What do you do for a living, Brad?”

“I’m a teacher at Mount Evelyn Christian School.”

“Oh yeah, cool! Primary or Secondary?”

“Middle School. Years 7–9.”

“Why Middle School?”

This is a question I have encountered a lot over the course of my time at MECS. Some people seem to have a hard time understanding why a person would willingly choose to spend their time with teenagers. For me, the answer is quite simple: I love it! I love working in the Middle School and I am dedicated to, and passionate about, teaching Middle School students.

Over the course of any given year, Middle School students can range in age from 11 to 16 years old—right in the heart of adolescence. Adolescence is a fascinating stage of life in which to encounter a person. It is a time of profound change, a time of transition from childhood toward adulthood, a time of potential, discovery, and passion. It is also an extremely influential time in the development of a person’s worldview, a time when one grapples with identity, the source of their worth, and ‘finding their place’ in God’s world. As Middle School teachers, we are granted the privilege of speaking into some of the most formative and influential years of a person’s life.

Given the array of changes occurring in these years, it should come as no surprise that there is a similarly wide range of student needs specific to this age group. In recent years, the Middle School staff has engaged in focussed and intentional professional development around understanding and effectively teaching this age group.

One of the voices that has most consistently resonated with the culture and vision of MECS is that of Rick Wormeli, an American author and educational consultant. In an interview with Education World, Wormeli described a number of strategies that assist in engaging Middle School students in the classroom. Our Middle School teachers aim to incorporate these strategies into the practice and planning of their lessons, and I’d like to share them with you:

Make it vivid – We aim to actively involve students in their learning, by frequently utilising experiences, immersions, and simulations.

Engage the emotions – Learning is not just about head knowledge! We don’t just aim to keep students interested in their learning but anxious to learn more.

Be novel – Expect the unexpected! We aim to mix things up and take advantage of unexpected learning opportunities.

Use more narrative – Middle School students have been immersed in stories throughout their entire lives and are used to the format. Where appropriate, we aim to introduce information in a narrative form.

Provide specific models of what we expect – Students need to know where to aim if they are going to kick a goal. We aim to provide students with exemplars (excellent examples) and past samples of student work to guide their efforts.

Provide frequent and specific feedback – Feedback is consistently identified as one of the most important elements of education. We aim to use a variety of assessment and feedback strategies, including written and verbal feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment.

Passion – Students can sense when a teacher is passionate about their subject. The way a teacher talks about their field of expertise and demonstrates how they are continually learning has the potential to inspire a similar passion in others.

Why Middle School?

Well, in the words of Rick Wormeli:

“Every day, we Middle School teachers laugh aloud, ignite imagination, heal pain, confront our own beliefs, quell fears, demonstrate the greater good, share our passion for our subjects, and invite morphing humans to make positive contributions to our world. What better job?”

I couldn’t agree more.

Bradley
MS Coordinator
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Centre Trip
Our Year 10 students and their fellow travellers head off to Central Australia this Saturday with an early 5:30am start. We pray that this will be a life-changing experience for our young people as they live in community with each other for 15 days and explore God’s amazing creation. The days at Yuendumu are always a highlight as they rub shoulders with our indigenous brothers and sisters, and experience what it is to be a ‘minority’ in our own country. We look forward to hearing all about their adventures on their return.

NAPLAN
Parents of students in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 will have received their NAPLAN reports in the last week, as well as a short letter from myself. I trust this letter provides some explanation as to the way we view NAPLAN testing across the school. That is, be encouraged that while we take these tests seriously, both in the way we conduct them and in the way we analyse what they tell us about the learning of each child, they only make up part of the picture.

The bigger part is not only the way in which each teacher knows each child, but in the ongoing partnership we have with parents as we seek together to grow and nurture each child in knowledge, skills and maturity. We look forward to continuing that relationship with all of our parents well into the future.

Tournament of the Minds
Last Sunday afternoon, alongside other excited staff and parents, we watched our Year 5/6 Tournament of the Minds team participate in the state final at Latrobe University. A big thank you to Di and Gen who spent the whole day at the event and have supported the students so enthusiastically over the life of this project. Whilst we didn’t get through to the Australasian final, our team exceeded expectation in getting this far as we have never participated in this event before! It was so great to see them working under pressure together, learning so much about working together as a team and being able to think quickly and critically in challenging circumstances. Our experience this year has certainly increased our interest in giving this another go next year. Congratulations to our fabulous team. You did yourselves and MECS proud!

Parent Teacher Meetings
Thanks for your participation in our recent parent teacher meetings and for the great feedback many of you have provided. We value this opportunity to chat about your child’s learning and celebrate with you the progress and developing maturity we see in our students each term. Final sessions are happening tonight and next Tuesday afternoon.

Upcoming Holidays
This will be my last Scoop for the term, because next week we will be publishing ReConnect instead, so can I thank all families for the way you have partnered with us this term. May the holiday period be one of rest and recuperation, particularly after these busy winter months. I look forward to seeing all our students back on Monday October 10.

FOCUS On... SS Café

I often ask students of all ages from around the world what their favourite class is. Predictably, I have found lunchtime to be their number one answer. After my initial redirecting that ‘lunchtime is not a subject’, I then realise that some of my most distinct memories of my schooling revolve around lunchtime. Sad? Maybe. But true.

Dr Gerry B approached me in 2009 with a radical new proposal for providing tucker in the Senior School. He proposed the Year 11 Business Management class run the Senior School Café for the entire school year. So I put the idea to my students and they voted to take it on. As the class is called ‘Business Management’ not ‘Business Employee’, I put the students in charge of nearly every aspect of the little business. While I retain veto power, the students...

• Set the menu and prices
• Write own policies & procedures
• Write own forms and checklists (cleaning, temperatures, etc.)
• Gain Food Handling training through Ranges TEC
• Find suppliers
• Order & manage stock
• Pay suppliers
• Serve customers
• Handle complaints
• Collect money
• Count and deposit/bank money
• Keep track of hours
• Distribute profits (if there are any - 10% to charity and the rest distributed to the students -which works out to about 4% each)

Apparently they enjoyed it, as every Spring since 2009, the Year 11 Business Management class voted to run the Senior School Café the following school year. In their pre-vote debate, they acknowledged that the average student will need to donate 60-100 recesses and lunches. They then identified the benefits...

• Act of service to fellow students
• Hands on business experience
• Direct and ongoing application of theory
• A unique ‘résumé builder’
• Sustained effort over 33 weeks
• Practicing charitable giving that hurts (not their dad or mum’s $)
• Learning teamwork (especially policy development and team tension over time)

It’s our vision of Christian schooling through ‘Transformational Education’ by providing ‘Rich and Active’ Learning as well as ‘Learning for Understanding, Appreciation and Responsible Action’.

The Senior School Café follows a long tradition of MECS seeking to be faithful to God in all of life. We seek to transform for Christ even in the often ungodly area of life we call Business.

Adam
Year 11 Coordinator
MECS Notes

Are things changing for your family next year?

If your changes mean that your children will not be attending MECS in 2017, please remember that you need to provide one full term’s notice, in writing, of your intention to withdraw your children from the school, or pay a term’s fees in lieu of this notice. Even if you are not completely sure whether you will be here next year, please let me know.

Feel free to contact me to discuss your children’s enrolment via email or via the main office 9738 6000.

Natasha
Enrolments & Office Manager

MECS Jobs

There are currently a number of jobs being advertised on the MECS website. See the website for more information.

Friends of MECS

Cook Off Day - Postponed until next term - Monday, October 17

If you are able to help with cooking on the day, donation of grocery items, or making a cash donation we would really appreciate your support.

Items we need include - Worcestershire sauce, bread crumbs, tins of pineapple pieces, brown sugar, vinegar, tomato sauce, corn flour, tinned tomatoes, chutney, sultanas, arborio rice, large foil containers with lids and 1ltr plastic containers with lids (to freeze meals in).

Father’s Day Stall

Last Friday the PUMP room was transformed into a ‘Fair Trade and Locally Made’ shopping destination!

Hundreds of items were happily purchased by children looking for the perfect gift for their Dad.

We hope all our Dads had a wonderful day celebrating with their families and that they enjoyed their gifts from the stall.

Nicoie
Community Relations Officer

Parliament Fun

Recently two staff members came from Victoria’s Legislative Assembly to explain how the Victorian Parliament works to our Middle School Cycle A students, and then to guide us through the process of making a law to eliminate plastic bags from all supermarkets. As well, Sharon Payze’s Year 11 Legal Studies students delivered an outstanding presentation to all our Cycle A students on the process of a Bill becoming a law. A ‘novel and vivid’ lesson in how our law making system works.

Tim
Middle School Teacher

Year 7 Cycle A students completing an activity on the process of making a law
Central Australia Trip Year 10

Day 1  Saturday 10 September  Melbourne to Adelaide (790 kms)
Day 2  Sunday 11 September  Adelaide to Glendambo (588 kms) (Time to write to your child at Alice Springs)
Day 3  Monday 12 September  Glendambo to Mulga Park Road Bush Camp (644 kms)
Day 4  Tuesday 13 September  Mulga Park Road to Alice Springs to Tilmouth Well (482 kms)
Day 5  Wednesday 14 September  Tilmouth Well to Yuendumu (111 kms) (Last day to write to your child at Uluru)
Day 6  Thursday 15 September  Yuendumu
Day 7  Friday 16 September  Yuendumu
Day 8  Saturday 17 September  Yuendumu to Alice Springs (298 kms)
Day 9  Sunday 18 September  Alice Springs
Day 10 Monday 19 September  Alice Springs to Yulara (Uluru) (446 kms)
Day 11 Tuesday 20 September  Uluru
Day 12 Wednesday 21 September  Uluru to Bush Camp - Last Day pick up letters at Uluru (485 kms)
Day 13 Thursday 22 September  Bush Camp to Coober Pedy (270 kms)
Day 14 Friday 23 September  Coober Pedy to Bush Camp past Woomera (480km)
Day 15 Saturday 24 September  Bush Camp to Murray Bridge (441 kms)
Day 16 Sunday 25 September  Murray Bridge to Melbourne (700 kms) Arrive 7pm

Worawa Debutant Dreaming Ball

On Saturday August 20, 7 young men from MECS (Toby, Daniel, Jordan, Luke, Jake, Keanu, Onesimus), 1 from MDCS (Kyle) and 2 from Ranges TEC (Armand, Hayden) partnered 10 girls from Worawa Aboriginal Girls College in their biennial ‘Debutant Dreaming Ball’. In this event, held at the Pullman Melbourne On The Park, the Worawa girls were introduced to prominent Aboriginal elders as part of their ‘growing into womanhood’ program. It was a wonderful night, rich in culture and celebration.

Participation in this event required the young men to spend 4 afternoons practising their dance routines as well as a few evenings in social settings. Julie from Ranges TEC did a fabulous job in organising the dance lessons as well as providing all of the administrative support for the young men to participate.

Leigh, the Worawa Debutant Dreaming organiser, had this to say about our young men: “Just wanted to let you know that the boys doing the Deb were absolutely wonderful tonight. Such a credit to the school, their parents and themselves!”

On behalf of the MECS, MDCS and Ranges TEC communities, we offer our heartiest thanks and congratulations to these fine young men for their willing support of these indigenous young women. Kind acts like this have profound long term implications.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator
Four Funerals and a Wedding

On Thursday September 1, the Year 9 and 10 Performing Arts students performed Four Funerals and a Wedding to a full house. ‘Four Funerals’ takes a comic spin of Romeo and Juliet where two dumb detectives try to solve the ‘murder case’. We have been working on this production since the start of the year, practising and completing backstage roles to get it ready. This was our final performance, and followed our entry in the Dandenong Ranges One Act Play Festival earlier in the year. It was great to be able to present the play to our family and friends and show them what we’ve been working on for so long. Everyone did an amazing job. Congratulations to all the Year 9 and 10 students who were a part of the performance!

Jacinta (Year 10)

Thank you to everyone who came along to see the show. Special thanks to Lance who joined the production at the last minute, operating sound and lighting for the performance!

PS: The cast agreed to donate the proceeds from Thursday night’s performance and the majority of the prize money from the festival to World Vision’s Linking Hands program which partners with Indigenous Communities to transform lives.

Marlene
Drama Teacher

Busy Time in the Kindergarten

Father’s Night

Last week the four year old kinder children enjoyed celebrating their dads with a special Father’s Night session. We saw all the dads playing with the children - from ‘camping’ in the home corner to having their hands painted to make a handprint. The evening finished with a few songs and a dance. Thank you to all our Dads, we hope you all had a wonderful Father’s Day, and were made to feel special, as you are in turn, a blessing to your families.

Bike Day

As a follow up to our road safety program the children had a ‘Bike Day’ at kinder. All of the children brought their own bikes along and rode around on the primary school asphalt, practising their skills at listening and looking, but most of all having lots of fun!

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator
Book Week

What an exciting week we had in the Library last week, celebrating Book Week. On Monday, we were extremely privileged to host book illustrator Marc for the day. Although most students did not know Marc’s name, most were aware of his illustrations of Emily Rodda’s Deltora Quest books. He was terrific! He thrilled and entertained us all with his fantastic airbrushed paintings of dragons and beasts and we all left the sessions believing that with practice, we too could draw just like him.

To celebrate the Children’s Book Council Book of the Year awards, on Wednesday lunchtime, Sue entertained us by reading from a selection of picture books. We know that Sue enjoys reading the books as much as the students enjoy listening to her, and the more noises and voices she can use, the better!

On Thursday and Friday, we held the Great Book Swap Challenge. We set ourselves the challenge of raising $600, which is a lot of $2 books and were delighted to come extremely close, with an amount of $590. A huge thank you to everybody who donated books and purchased ‘new’ books. This money will be used by the Indigenous Literacy Foundation to purchase books for children in indigenous communities, with the aim of improving literacy levels in these communities.

Overall, it was a great week of promoting and celebrating books and reading. Bring on Book Week 2017!

Fiona
Library Manager

SP Hooptime

We had a great day at the Senior Primary Hooptime day. Once again I was very proud of how our students competed, especially both our teams in the Future Stars division. They unfortunately didn’t win a game but competed with great sportsmanship.

Our All-Star team made it to the grand final but ended up losing by just 3 points. Fortunately, Hooptime rules state that if a grand final is lost by 4 points or less, the losing team still qualifies for the regional final event.

So our All-Star team will be competing in the regional final event in Term 4.

Thanks again to the parents and friends who came along to support the students and to the Middle School coaches who did an excellent job!

Jason
PS Sport Coordinator
**MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES**

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**Hiking Pack for Sale**

Near New condition Black Wolf - Bugaboo 60 + 10 litres with built in raincover, compression strap, height adjustable straps, padded waist strap and lots of compartments. Only used once for a practice hike. Paid $240 asking $180 ONO. Contact Sandra on 0422 882 339.

**Circus Tickets**

The Great Moscow Circus has generously given NCR 500 tickets to sell to their Grand Opening Night in Bayswater on 15 September. Tickets prices are normally $47 per adult and $32 per child and for this night only tickets prices will be $25 per adult and child (over 3).

The Great News is that all money raised through ticket sales will go directly to support three hostels supporting those in need in East Timor. If you are interested please contact Tim Paynez 0482 278 898 ASAP.

**Car Boot Sale**

Ranges TEC Year 11 & 12 students are currently undertaking a community project at Tasty Az, a catering social enterprise for people with disabilities. Our students are working on the construction of a garden shed, chook shed, chook run and doing some landscaping. Please support the Tasty Az car boot sale as they raise funds for project materials.

Sat 8 Oct 9am-2pm, 111 Mangans Road, Lilydale.

Car Site and Stall Bookings Essential. Contact Jules 0449 028 637, tastyaz@hotmail.com

$20 Car Site or Stall

$15 Community Groups/NFP

Gold Coin Entry


**Free Family Fun Day**

Aiming to connect families with local services including services for young people with disabilities.

Thursday September 29, 11am–3pm, Yarra Centre (2435 Warburton Highway, Yarra Junction).

Jumping Castle, Silent Disco, giveaways, BBQ, facepainting, arts & crafts, free swimming and learn to swim assessments and so much more!

**Apple Man**

The Apple Man is coming on Friday Sept 16 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag, 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 Sept 16.

**Experienced Babysitter**

I am a responsible, caring 18 year old with a licence. I have 4 years experience looking after children ages 1-13. References available on request. Flexible availability - day or night, $10/hour. Ring Kate Willcox 0411 020 434.

**Art Exhibition Invitation**

FLORILEGIUM: metaphors of damage, love & other concerns.

Works by Julian Distefano (former MECS teacher & parent), from September 17, 2016 at Five Ways Galleries, 1282 Mount Dandenong Tourist Rd, Kalorama.

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