Year 6 - Prep Buddies get together

Jordan with Buddy, Jenson, enjoy some ‘getting-to-know-you’ time.
From the Principal

Week One

One week in and we have all hit the ground running. The Kindergarten started with shorter sessions and it was great to see our youngest ‘students’ settle into our new facility. There was only one photo that was going to push the Preps off the front page of last week’s newsletter - the kinder kids! What a fantastic achievement by a strong and committed team!

With great power comes great responsibility or one might say great car parking attendant duties. With a positive outlook, Gerry and I went down to the Primary car parking area and started to see how adding a fleet of new cars was going to impact our car park flow. What I was met with was a parent group that was not only patient, but willing to co-operate in any way possible. Thanks to all our parents for their help in resolving this new challenge. I also thank our staff who have answered the call to park elsewhere and allow space for the new cars. This situation has reaffirmed what a great community we have here at MECS.

Anticipation, some tears and a buzz of excitement characterised our first day. Students were engaged and eagerly adjusted to their new classes and surrounds. The excitement of a new school year sets a wonderful tone for the coming months.

It was great to see a good number of parents stay for a quick bite and ‘TLC’ as they enjoyed the ups and downs of the start of a new school year. I hope and trust that these get togethers will continue and that community life will flourish during our celebration year.

School Management Software

If the office staff are looking a little frazzled it’s because we are changing over to new school management software to manage all aspects of school data – from finance to attendance. The new program will enable us to move to straightforward electronic roll marking, improved communication via text messages and email, and better systems of tracking student welfare. It’s never easy to change such systems and I want to give a special commendation to Chris, Corrie, Alison and Craig for the great effort on their part in the change over. Of course Cassie, Paula, Rosalie, Amanda, Nicole, Natasha and Michelle are also learning the ropes too. Please be patient with us while we go through this massive change.

Reflections

Throughout the year, we will be focussing on various aspects of MECS life that have helped to shape the past, present and future of Christian education. You will hear from some who journeyed through the pioneering times, some who faced challenges, and from others who were part of the expansion and consolidation of MECS. As our history mixes with current events, it is with respect that we acknowledge those who dared to dream. Below is an account of the beginning of MECS.

1974 - Moving into secondary education

In last week’s ‘Reflections’, Melissa talked about “new beginnings” – both now and back in 1973 when MECS first opened. MECS started as a primary school, so the question came up very early in 1973 – what happens to the year 6 students in 1974? Where would they go? So began the thinking of extending the MECS education into secondary school. Many of the people who were involved in starting MECS were also fundamental in extending MECS into secondary school. A long term teacher at MECS, Ken M, wrote a history book called “21 Years Blessed” (for the schools 21st anniversary), and below is an extract relating to the motivation and memories of starting Year 7 in 1974 at MECS.

“As the first year of the newly opened Mount Evelyn Christian Primary School progressed, one thing in particular worried the Board. The one thing was the now obvious absurdity of sending their children to a secular secondary school with its humanistic curriculum after going to so much trouble to give them a Christian education with a curriculum based on the bible. After it was pointed out to them by the Principal, Jack M, that students in country Central Schools continued after Grade 6 in the same school with the same one teacher, to a class arrangement in Grades 7 and 8, they accepted the possibility of students. So with Dan as the Form 1 teacher, secondary education began at Mount Evelyn Christian School with twenty two students, the first Christian Parent Controlled School in Australia to attempt this task.”

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February Board Report

At our first meeting for 2013, the Board were excited to have a tour of our lovely Kindergarten facilities. We are thankful to God for His faithfulness and wonderful provision in this new endeavour for our school. We also visited the Primary playground to see the new mast net climbing equipment and are grateful for the incredible work of the Parents and Friends group in raising the necessary funds.

Following an opening devotion by Gerry using ‘The Insect and the Buffalo’, Paul presented his first Principal’s report and Gerry advised that the Infrastructure Master Plan will be presented at the next meeting. He also gave an update on the beginning to the year for Ranges TEC.

Board Chair Sue told us about some upcoming activities of CEN (our umbrella organisation for Christian Education) and we confirmed the distribution of Portfolios among Board members. We are looking forward to a great year as we celebrate 40 years of Christian Education in Mount Evelyn.

Louise on behalf of the Board

Year 12 Study Camp

On the Thursday morning of the Oasis study camp, the year 12s of 2013 gathered together with great excitement and anticipation at the prospects of what the academic year would bring. Worries and fears about the new challenges that lay ahead were felt by all, however with the love and support of the teachers, many queries, questions, doubts and uncertainties were put to rest. Through the useful and in-depth seminars given by the Senior School teachers we were encouraged to face the year with a sense of optimism. Time management, stress management, team building activities, career choices and of course the ATAR were all aspects discussed throughout the two days. In addition, some fun and relaxing recreational activities such as archery, volleyball, the flying fox, pool and ping-pong and not to mention pampering sessions for the ladies and some Twister, were also provided!

The evening was a time for all the students’ mentors to come and participate in the preparation for ‘Year 12. This was an opportunity for students to express their personal concerns and goals and also allowed for mentors to provide further strategies and techniques in helping the students accomplish their targets. The camp was a very valuable and reassuring experience, as it gave us the confidence to believe in ourselves and know that whatever obstacles we faced, we had a strong support network behind us to work through them.

Pri-el, Yr 12 Student
**MUSIC Notes**

**Enrol in Music**

We’re hearing some beautiful sounds and having a lot of fun up in the instrumental music rooms. If you’d like to join in and learn an instrument at school we have vacancies in violin, cello, guitar, electric bass, drums, singing, and flute. You can learn on your own or with a friend - a lower cost option.

We’re also looking for five students to enrol for clarinet or saxophone so we can invite a new instrumental specialist to come and help us expand our range of instruments offered. Pick up a form at the office or download one from the website!

Kerrie
Instrumental Tuition Coordinator

**Music for Young Children**

The music program presents flexible, weekly, hands-on sessions which develop music concepts and general life skills, using a combination of speech rhymes, action songs, games, finger plays, drama and stories.

If your child loves music then this program would be lovely for you and your child to participate in. There are a couple of vacancies available in the 2 different sessions. You are also welcome to come to a ‘Come and Try’ session – bookings are made through the office.

This program is led by Music teacher Rachel. Held on Tuesday mornings, session times are 9-9.30am or 9.45-10.15am. Fees are per child and are paid per term; additional siblings are $5 each per session (over 2 years), siblings under 2 (free).

Term 1 $70 7 sessions
Term 2 $90 9 sessions
Term 3 $80 8 sessions
Term 4 $80 8 sessions

For a brochure with more information see the MECS website or contact the Main Office.

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**Primary GTs Term 1**

MECS Primary run a whole Primary Get Together (GT) every couple of weeks. The GTs are lead by the students, with each class taking a turn. Parents are most welcome to attend. Come join us at 9am in the Pump Room.

The dates and classes on for Term 1 are:

- **Week 4** 25/3  JPS
- **Week 5** 27/2  SPB
- **Week 7** 18/3  MPA

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**VCE Results**

Last year 39 (in 2011 36) students enrolled in the VCE. All of the 39 VCE students satisfactorily gained their VCE certificate.

The students’ ATAR (the Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank, a score ranging from 0.00 to 99.95) scores ranged from 99.2 as the highest to 31.35 as the lowest. The average ATAR was 67.41, significantly up from 2011’s results (60.30) and this was the highest average ATAR that our students have achieved over the past decade. ATAR results reflect the percentage rank of a student in the current VCE year. For example, the student with an ATAR of 95.25 has performed better than 95.25% of all of the students who attempted their VCE this year in the State.

Seven (18.4% of the class) of last year’s students obtained ATARs over 90% (Range: 99.2-91.9). While six of these were girls, it was pleasing that the one boy who performed at this level did so by radically changing his study habits and used almost all of his study blocks in the Year 12 study centre.

Compared to the other private and Government schools in the area, we have had a ‘very good’ year, though in truth, this simply reflects (mostly) the nature of the cohort of students enrolled in Year 12 and importantly the character of our highly skilled and competent teaching staff. We must also acknowledge the significant contribution that Connie and her team of Learning Assistants make to these results.

We are greatly encouraged by the vast majority of students who gave of their very best, who have grown in more ways than can be measured by an ATAR and who are well equipped to serve God in the next stage of their lives. For these reasons, we must maintain our ‘open’ enrolment policy for those who would seek to study for their VCE irrespective of their academic ability. Given this policy, MECS will continue to carry the ‘cost’ of low average ATAR results if we are serious about a radical Christian education where each child is given the opportunity to undertake VCE. The VCE has been designed for all students not just for those who are seeking tertiary entry. Thus, students who are simply seeking the VCE certificate often don’t worry about the ATAR because their vocational path does not require this.

We as Senior School staff continue to work at building a Senior School that promotes a rigorous approach to the VCE which is seen as being part of a student’s whole hearted worship of God. We also pursue an approach to education which seeks to help each student to do his or her best without ‘spoon feeding’. Thus, continued success at tertiary level tends to be the norm for MECS students.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAR Range</th>
<th>Number of Students (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99.95 – 89.95</td>
<td>18.4  5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>89.95 – 79.95</td>
<td>13.2  20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.95 – 69.95</td>
<td>15.8  11.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>69.95 – 59.95</td>
<td>21.1  14.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>59.95 – 49.95</td>
<td>10.5  17.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>49.95 – 39.95</td>
<td>7.9   17.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>39.95 – 29.95</td>
<td>13.2  2.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.95 – 19.95</td>
<td>0     5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.95 – 9.95</td>
<td>0     5.7</td>
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The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is a major component of the Australian Government’s package ‘Building a Healthy, Active Australia’ that aims to improve the health and well-being of Australian children.

MECS is once again participating in the AASC program in Term 1, 2013.

The Term 1 activity still with places is:

Monday 3:45pm – 4:45pm: Netball
7 Places left

The program will run for 7 weeks beginning 11 February.

Children attending will be offered fruit for afternoon tea prior to the activities commencing. Please ensure that your child brings a refillable water bottle to each session.

The program will offer fun, safe and inclusive activities which will provide children with the opportunity to develop their motor skills. It also promotes a healthy lifestyle in a comfortable, non-competitive environment.

If you would like your child to participate in this free program, please complete a parental form (available from the office) and return this to the office ASAP.

For further information, contact the Main Office.

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**EMA**

**Education Maintenance Allowance for 2013**

**EMA Eligibility** – The Education Maintenance Allowance is paid to parents of eligible students under 16 years of age, whose child is enrolled at a Government or non-Government School in Victoria on census day, February 28, 2013 for first instalment and August 2, 2013 for the second instalment.

The Education Maintenance Allowance will be paid in two instalments, and to be eligible the following must be true for you on these dates:

- on 29 January 2013 for the first instalment and
- on 15 July 2013 for the second instalment:
  
  (a) be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit, that is, a holder of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or be an eligible Health Care Card (HCC) or Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holder within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004, OR
  
  (b) be a Veteran Affairs Pensioner (TPI), OR
  
  (c) be a (temporary) foster parent AND
  
  (d) submit your application to the school by the date/s listed below.

Parents who receive a Carer Allowance (formerly known as Child Disability Allowance), or any other benefit or allowance not income tested by Centrelink are not eligible for the EMA unless they also comply with one of (a) (b) or (c) above.

**Submission Dates** – The application form must be lodged at the school by 26 February 2013 for the first instalment. LATE APPLICATIONS CANNOT BE ACCEPTED due to government rules. **We urge all who believe they are eligible to apply, as this also significantly affects State government funding for MECS.**

EMA application forms will be sent out to existing families who have received EMA allowance for 2012. If you are eligible for the 2013 EMA please collect an application form from the main office. If you are uncertain about your eligibility or have any questions please contact Alison or Craig via the office.

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**Looking after our children and staying safe at MECS Primary**

With so many new families on the grounds at MECS we want to remind everyone that the lower car park in the Primary becomes a play area during the school day. The large wire gates are closed and we hope to have signage up soon to remind people that no cars can be parked in the lower asphalt area during the school day. For Kindergarten parents who are staying for a session and helping please remember to park in the gravel car park, and NOT in the asphalt area. For school parents who are helping or picking up or dropping off outside of the beginning or end of the school day please ensure you do not stay parked in the lower asphalt playground car park.

We wish to remind all visitors and helpers that you must be signed in at the main office to be present on the school grounds during school hours (8.50am to 3.15pm). Signing in and out of the Kindergarten is not the same as signing into the school. The school needs to know of your presence within the school, and teachers who are on yard duty need to check any unfamiliar adults who may be coming through the school.

Thanks for your cooperation.

**Dollarmite Banking**

This week all primary students should have taken home an information pack about Dollarmite Banking. If you have any questions about this please contact me.

Don’t forget banking day is Wednesdays. Preps can bring their banking in on Tuesdays for Term 1. Please place your bank books in the grey bags in the classrooms.

**ICT Student Agreement Forms**

Forms are being sent home via email to each family today. If you do not have an email address, do not receive the email or are unable to print the forms, you should collect a copy for each of your children from the office on Friday. Please read the covering letter and forms carefully and complete the appropriate one for each child. Forms must be returned by Monday 18 February. Students will not be able to continue using the ICT resources if the form is not returned.

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**Celebrating 40 Years**

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**ICT Coordinator**
Preps have made a great start to school last week and have done lots of interesting things. They have met library, sport and music teachers and have enjoyed stories, games and especially free dance!

In class they have done some amazing work and lots of investigating about Summer and the things we are learning in Numeracy and Literacy.

Getting to know their surroundings has included meeting some special people such as Paul and Di, Gerry and his puppet... who couldn’t remember his name and whose leg dropped off!

On Thursday they got to meet their Year 6 buddies for the first time with some ‘getting to know you’ activities and then having morning tea together.

It is lovely that the children will have lots of friendly faces to see and people to say hello to them as they venture into the big school yard and start their journey at school.

Jan & Rebekah
Prep Teachers
First Week of Playgroup

Playgroup got underway this week in the beautiful Gumtree room of the Kindergarten. The children love the new purpose built space to play in. Well done to all who worked so hard to achieve this milestone in the life of the school.

Heather  
Newsletter Editor

Year 9 Village and the New Water Feature

The area outside the Year 9 Village rooms is going to be developed this year. The rocks are in place and the area is going to be developed into a seating area with a water feature as a Year 9 project. Can’t wait to see the finished product!

Heather  
Newsletter Editor
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
11am Tuesday on published week. Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office.

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.

Bike/Guinea Pigs for Sale
Girls bike: Malvern Star Livewire 24” in very good condition. $150.
Baby Guinea Pigs: $10.
Contact Jarka.

Unit to Let
3 bedroom unit in Kilsyth. Close to shops and Kilsyth pool. Freshly painted, good size bedrooms and rear yard.

Stall Holders Wanted
Bubs and Kids Community Market in support of the RCH Good Friday Appeal. On sell your kids clothes and toys etc. Stall holder fee goes directly to the RCH Good Friday Appeal.
Stalls from $30 each or two for $45.
Saturday 16 March, 9am-1pm. Jean Eales Pavilion, Lilydale Show Grounds.
Contact Kerry or Simone.

Student Desks for Sale
40 student desks 1200 x 600mm. $5 each. Contact Main Office.

Bike & Desk Chair for Sale
Malvern Star Boys 24” Mountain Bike, 18 speed, good interim size when a rider is not ready for a full size bike. Shimano gears front and rear, good quality alloy brake components. Good Condition. $50.
Student Computer Desk Chair, height and back adjustable Good Condition. $10.
Contact Ian.

Unit to Let
Unit in Yarra Glen - quiet, modern, centrally located, 2 bedroom, single garage.
Available from 21/2/13. Inspections welcome. $250 per week.
Contact Thomas.

Electrical Apprenticeship Needed
3rd-4th year Electrical Apprentice needs a new apprenticeship. Recently retrenched due to his previous employers need to downsize. Has experience in commercial, solar and air conditioning and has completed his TAFE classes. Honest, hardworking, punctual, well presented and has own transport. He is very keen to complete his apprenticeship. If you can help please contact Leon.

Parents are warmly invited to the Whole School Assembly to be held at 10.20am, Tuesday Feb 19 in the School Gym.

If you wish you can join the Staff for a cuppa in the staffroom after the assembly.