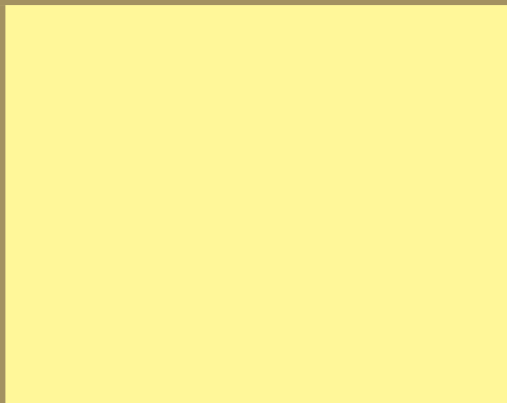


Spirit

of Sandhurst



Issue 4
November 2011
Catholic Education Sandhurst

Reflections from the Director



As we near the end of the school year for 2011, it is timely to reflect on what this year has brought forth.

There is much to celebrate across our school communities in the midst of what has been a very challenging year in so many aspects. The floods which began our year devastated the lives of many of our affected families and yet they continued to find hope, supported and inspired by their own community and the broader community of Catholic education. Their heroic and resilient attitudes gift us all. Other communities have encountered tragic and untimely deaths of both children and

adults. Once again the compassionate and hope-filled outreach of our school leaders and our school communities is assisting heart-broken families to begin to try and re-build their lives.

What and who is at the heart of these communities? We know that God is at the heart of our Catholic school communities and it assists us sometimes to draw upon the words of wise people to see the gift that is open to us:

'We exist to be miracle workers to one another. It is in community that we are called to grow. It is in community that we come to see God in the other. It is in community that we see our own emptiness filled up. It is in community that we are called beyond the pinched horizons of our own lives, our own countries and gives us the gifts we do not have within ourselves...the function of community is to enable us to be about something greater than ourselves.' (Chittister,2006:60)

As you read the pages of this edition of Spirit of Sandhurst you will experience the many highlights and celebrations of 2011. These pages represent our Catholic education community continually aspiring to be 'One Body, One Spirit in Christ – Called to Action' which is our guiding theme for this year. From the WYD11 Pilgrimage to Madrid and the Social Justice initiatives of the various Secondary Colleges and the Diocesan Alternative Schoolies, to the encouragement of The Arts through the Festivals of the Sacred and the MacKillop Art Exhibition, to the Jubilarian and Educare celebrations of the profession of education, extraordinary families, staff and students have indeed been active in spreading the Good News of hope in our world.

We give thanks for the strength of community which has enabled us to grow throughout 2011 and we wish everyone the blessings of the miracle of the Christ-child during Advent and Christmas.

Blessings

Ms Phil Billington
 Director
 Catholic Education Sandhurst

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Parents as leaders in our schools



'The essential conversation' is the crucial exchange that occurs between parents and teachers – a dialogue that takes place many times a year across our Diocese. As the first and ongoing educators of their child, parents have a strong role to play in their children's learning and wellbeing. A strong partnership between school and home enhances the vibrancy and effectiveness of schools and, most importantly, it builds a positive future for children and indeed for families and for the broader school community.

Research has found that in fact, 'parent expectations are far more powerful than many of the structural factors of the home (e.g. single or two-parent families, families with resident or non resident fathers, divorced parents, adopted or non-adopted children, or only children and non only children). It is not so much the structure of the family, but rather the beliefs and expectations of the adults in the home that contribute most to achievement' (Hattie 2009:71) and this is where the role of the school is so important in assisting parents to understand their own importance and influencing and supporting them in this effort.

In Catholic Education Sandhurst there is an increasing commitment to the role of parents in school and the broader parish and education community. The development of School Boards across Sandhurst is exemplary as was revealed in an ACU research study (2006). Parents are invited to engage in leadership through School Board membership, representative membership of the Sandhurst School Education Board and as panel members as part of the School Review process as well as on employment panels. Sandhurst also has a parent representative on the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body (VCSPB). The strengthening of this critical partnership across Catholic education in Sandhurst is focussed on engaging all the gifts – a core call of our Baptismal commitment as active

members of the Church. This ensures that all the wisdom is engaged in the vital decision making which guides the vision and growth of each school.

In 2011 the Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) held the first Community Forum to engage and consult with parents and the broader community. The Forum was held in Wangaratta in conjunction with the Term Two SSEB meeting and planning day. Over 80 staff and parents from Catholic communities attended the inaugural forum hosted by Catholic Regional Education Wangaratta (CREW) at St Bernard's Primary School. Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ms Billington said she was delighted with the spirit of the Catholic school community evident in Wangaratta, particularly the parent support through the schools. "The evening involved staff and parents eager to hear about plans for the future and express their thoughts on Catholic Regional Education Wangaratta (CREW)," said Ms Billington. It was very pleasing to see the development of CREW which represents parents and school leaders working together.

Sandhurst has a number of regional groups of parents (School Boards) and school leaders and priests working together such as Catholic Education Shepparton and Mooroopna (CESM), Catholic Education Yarrowonga, Benalla Catholic Education and Catholic Education Goldfields (CEG). Catholic Education Wodonga (CEW) has established a federated model of school governance across the four schools of the Wodonga Parish and has built up the parent role through Parent Representatives and regular Parent Community Forums in each school. The Sandhurst School Education Board is committed to making the community forums an annual event after the tremendous feedback from the Wangaratta forum.



Road to Spain 2011

World Youth Day Pilgrimage

by Jane Branigan

The Spirit of WYD

World Youth Day (WYD) 2011 was an amazing experience! It was fun, challenging, provided opportunities to make friends from across the world, explore Spain, celebrate our Catholic faith and deepen the individual's relationship with God. In every sense it was a pilgrimage, a parallel journey, physically from Sandhurst to Spain and an internal journey exploring both religious and spiritual landscapes. Although young people will choose to attend WYDs for a variety of reasons, invariably they are touched by the faith, enthusiasm and celebration of all that is Catholic. The immense joy, infectious spirit and overwhelming presence of our God, combined to achieve what will be for all participants and certainly for me, a most memorable event.

The Sandhurst Pilgrims

The Sandhurst group comprised 56 pilgrims including the co-leaders Tim Lougoon (from Sandhurst Youth Ministry), and me, Jane Branigan sponsored the Catholic Education Office CEO), our wonderful chaplains Fr. Jake Mudge and Fr. Rob Galea, three teachers Ben Hedderman, Jason Guiliano and Lucy Laban (sponsored by the CEO), Tennyson Collins (Sandhurst YCS), Donna Willcock (a teacher sponsored by FCJ College Benalla) and Junray Rayna a Sandhurst Seminarian. The remainder of the group were secondary school students and young adults from across the diocese, all of whom embraced the challenge of pilgrimage wholeheartedly. David Leslie, Principal of FCJ College Benalla, and Ashley Caldwell and Novelito Lim, who are both Seminarians, joined the group in Madrid.

Avila and Segovia

After landing at the Madrid airport we travelled north to Avila, an ancient walled city. St Teresa of Avila was born in this city. We also visited Segovia to celebrate Eucharist in the Vera Cruz Church where St. John of the Cross is entombed. St John of the Cross continues to inspire Christians today for his unshakeable faith in the darkest times of his life.

Days in the Diocese - Televera

From Avila, we travelled south through Toledo, stopping to visit the Cathedral of St. Mary and then on to Talevera de la Reina, into the very warm welcome of the Sisters, Missionaries of Providence and the Joaquin Alonso College Community. We were introduced to our host families and sent out in pairs, threes, fours and even one group of five to experience the generous hospitality of the many families who had volunteered to open their homes and their hearts to the Sandhurst pilgrims.

Madrid

We left Talevera with very mixed feelings, excited about the prospect of WYD but sad to be leaving behind such beautiful people. Madrid was indeed a huge experience, a gathering of young people from across the globe. French, Italians, English, Portuguese, Americans and New Zealanders to mention only a few with whom we shared the various activities. One day one in Madrid, 3,000 Aussies gathered and among many other themes we remembered Bishop Joe and his legacy to the youth of the world but especially to Sandhurst.

The Papal Vigil and Mass were of course the pinnacle of the Madrid experience and were indeed a real highlight for me personally and for many others. We did however, experience many challenges. As the temperature rose to 45 degrees we took the subway as close as we could to "Cuatro Vientos" travelling in small groups to combat the overcrowding. We reached our designated area, all our small groups reconnected and we laid out sleeping bags to claim our camping spot. Then the storm broke and it began to rain, we donned raincoats and others sought shelter under their ground sheets. The rain stopped and due to the heat we dried out very quickly. Then the heavens opened again, this time with lightning. We had a leaders meeting, considered the safety of those in our care and our keen desire to sleep out and wake up to the Papal Mass, the culmination of WYD. We decided that together we could survive the elements using the ground sheets, the crutches and wheelchair (we happened to have because one pilgrim broke her toe) as tent poles, the rope and knife brought along 'just in case' by another resourceful member of our group and the clips of our lanyards, we constructed one very large tent. This example of a group united by common purpose, solidarity and a deep sense of care for each other left a profound impression on me. It typified the challenges of WYD and the blessings attained by working together and trusting our God.



St Leonardo de Yauge - Our Retreat

The following day we left Madrid as a group firmly bound together, walking ten feet tall because of our personal growth and the almost tangible presence of God, our constant travelling companion. We again travelled north to a somewhat cooler location St. Leonardo de Yauge. We arrived in the countryside at a beautiful and luxurious hotel; in stark contrast to the challenging yet adequate accommodation in Madrid. Our purpose here was to retreat and reflect on the week in Madrid. To remember the events, experiences and people who had contributed to our amazing experience of WYD. We encouraged the pilgrims to notice the presence of God in themselves and others and to consider the implications for their return to daily life in Australia. To use the tools of prayer, scripture reading, Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and mass to continue their relationship with God and remain focused on their journey of faith.

Space here permits only a glimpse of all we experienced, but hopefully enough to give you a sense of the "Road to Spain" for the Sandhurst WYD pilgrimage, 2011. It is important in conclusion to thank the many people whose contributions made this event all it was, for those sufficiently fortunate to be ambassadors for Sandhurst, in what was more accurately a Sandhurst event.

Thank you Sandhurst

I wish to thank: Ms Phil Billington, Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst for her personal advocacy and support for WYD. Thank you to our Diocesan Administrator, Frank Marriott and the Council of Priests for outstanding support and encouragement on many levels. As mentioned previously the financial assistance given by the CEO in teacher sponsorship makes such a venture possible. The practical support of other CEO personnel including Ms. Brenda Keenan, Mr. Michael Crowe and Mrs. Jo Iwanuch was also invaluable. The parents who entrusted their young people to our care and to the priests, friends and families who waved goodbye and greeted us on our return, thank you. My heartfelt thanks is also extended to those who prayed for us. Your contribution was certainly evident and please be assured your prayers were answered.

I am very thankful also to Tim Lougoon, Fr. Jake, Fr. Rob the small group leaders and indeed to all the pilgrims. My life has been greatly enriched by this experience and by the opportunity to share it with all of you. I wish to acknowledge also the inspiration of Bishop Joe, in whose memory we undertook this pilgrimage. His spirit accompanied us throughout. Ultimately, of course, the glory honour and praise is due to our God who transforms every moment of our lives.

Thanks be to God!!



MacKillop Art Exhibition

Vivid water colours, acrylic paintings, photographs and ceramic creations have been brought together from across the diocese as part of the MacKillop Art Exhibition for 2011. The exhibition which was inaugurated last year to celebrate the Canonisation of Saint Mary MacKillop features artworks from primary and secondary Catholic schools of the Sandhurst Diocese. The result is an inspiring and diverse exhibition which showcases an exciting array of young talent.

The MacKillop Exhibition is the first diocesan exhibition to bring together artwork from a variety of primary and secondary schools within Sandhurst, many of the schools having taken part in the Artist in Residence Program with renowned water colourist, Mr Terry Jarvis. The workshops develop the artistic talents of students and bring the 2011 diocesan theme "Called to Action" to life.

Mr Jarvis said it has been a privilege to be involved in The Arts program for Catholic Education Sandhurst which is now in its second year. "The Arts have a special relationship with learning, lateral thinking, discipline and courage, delivering young minds to be well equipped, ready for their chosen calling in life."

"It is exciting for me to see these aspects of life develop in them as they discover new vision and purpose for their life's journey," said Mr. Jarvis.

The exhibition clearly acknowledges the extraordinary life of Australia's first Saint and her inspiration to countless generations of Australians. Representatives from the Sisters of Saint Joseph have launched the exhibition each year ensuring a deep connection between the Josephites and the MacKillop Exhibition.

Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, Ms Phil Billington is delighted with the MacKillop Exhibition. "It was a privilege to have representatives from the Sisters of St Joseph with us in Bendigo in 2011 to launch the MacKillop Exhibition and for the inauguration last year."

"The Artist in Residence Program is bringing forth the giftedness of the students and the annual exhibition celebrates the talent of our students within the grandeur of one of Bendigo's most wonderful landmarks – Mary MacKillop would be thrilled with bush kids exhibiting in such a gallery," enthused Ms Billington.

Sacred Heart Cathedral provides the perfect backdrop for the exhibition, the amber light within the Cathedral walls adds to the overall effect of the exhibition which is skilfully co-curated by Ms Cath Watter from Catholic Education Sandhurst and Mr Peter Hughes from Catholic College Bendigo.





Co-curator Ms Cath Watter said it was a delight to curate the exhibition in the magnificent gallery space of Sacred Heart Cathedral.

“The creative expression and technical quality of the artwork was a tribute to our students and their teachers. The whole event certainly captured the unique spirit of Sandhurst,” said Cath.

Artwork is carefully selected and grouped together to create a visually co-ordinated display which has impressed exhibition viewers. The sheer talent of the students and the diversity of the artwork adds to the success of the exhibition. After just two years the MacKillop Exhibition has grown and will continue to grow as schools embrace the Artist in Residence Program and the opportunity to awaken the artistic talents of their students.

Whilst the exhibition celebrates the talents of Sandhurst students it is also an exhibition for visitors and the wider diocesan community. The Sacred Heart Cathedral provides the perfect art gallery for the October exhibition and is accessible to all. For those who have not had a chance to visit the MacKillop Art Exhibition in the past this is one to put on your calendar for 2012. The exhibition is an annual event which is open for public viewing for a two week period towards the end of October and is well worth a visit.





andhurst

is alive with the sound of music!

by **Kass Brown**

Music has always been an integral part of the Catholic faith; a way to teach, a way to learn, a way to rejoice. Now students in the Sandhurst Diocese are discovering a new-found excitement and passion for singing through an innovative partnership.

Ms Phil Billington, Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst, said that she has long held the belief that "the Arts are integral to human development and especially within Catholic schools". It was with this belief, along with a desire to awaken and develop "the God-given gifts of our students and teachers", that she set out to develop a unique choral arts program for the schools in the Sandhurst Diocese.

In 2009, Ms Billington met with the Directors of a3– Australian Arts Alive, a branch of the Australian School of Performing Arts (ASPA), and together they developed a program to provide song and movement workshops, culminating in a final, massed 'Festival of the Sacred', for all grade 5 and 6 students and their teachers in the Sandhurst Diocese

Best known for their Australian Girls Choir and Aus Girls Dance programs, ASPA has been delivering exceptional performing arts education, both in Australia and overseas, for 27 years. By engaging a3 to work in Sandhurst's schools, CEO Sandhurst have provided their students with the opportunity to access specialised music and dance education. Teachers have also been equipped with the skills and knowledge to continue to build sustainable performing arts programs at their schools and to incorporate the arts into other disciplines.

The program consists of popular and sacred songs, fun and high energy dance routines, along with games and activities to develop the students' performance skills, confidence and teamwork. Dr Kevin Messer, Principal at Holy Rosary School in Heathcote said: "The impact of the choral program

on the 5/6 students at Holy Rosary, Heathcote has been extraordinary. We have examples of students coming to school when they could have had a day off because they didn't want to miss out on the session, students whose demeanour has become totally animated during session times. As one student summed it up in conversation: 'They make singing fun'."

As well as a new-found love of singing, students have also experienced growing confidence, teamwork and a sense of shared achievement. Research also suggests that singing in a group helps to improve cognitive function, language skills, spatial awareness and reduces stress and wards off depression.

Sally Gawley, a tutor from a3 said: "The kids' ability to learn and memorise lyrics, use their faces to tell a story, focus on a conductor and stand confidently on stage have all improved from the first year of the program – it's incredibly rewarding to see them perform at the Festival of the Sacred at the end of the term's work".

The response that teachers and a3 staff have had from students has also been overwhelming. Tom from St Mary's in Myrtleford participated in the first year of the program and told a3: "I could say thank you a thousand times for what you did. I have never had so much fun in a music lesson... You taught me how to sing and dance in a fun way."

After the success of the program's first year, CEO Sandhurst committed to the continuation and growth of the choral arts program with an even greater emphasis on building teacher capacity and student performance standards. Students were extended with more challenging repertoire and choreography, as well as vocal solos and speaking parts, while teachers had the opportunity to conduct one of the groups.



Managing Director of ASPA, Nicole Muir, said: "The partnership between ASPA and CEO Sandhurst has realised our long-held dream to take our non-traditional, highly engaging approach to choral music into schools. The teachers and students of Sandhurst have embraced us with open arms and, as we enter year three, we are thrilled by the mutually rewarding nature of this dynamic program. News of the success of this program has spread to other dioceses and CEO Sandhurst is seen to be leading the way with the creation of this strategic partnership."

By forging this strategic partnership with ASPA, CEO Sandhurst is now in its third year of offering an unique, enriched learning experience for its students and teachers and Ms Billington could not be more delighted: "Staff and students are alive with the experience! It has re-ignited the Arts in our schools. a3 are exceptional partners - exceptional standards of delivery, open to our needs and our ideas - an extraordinary partnership that is life-giving for all involved!"

Festival of the Sacred 2011

The joy on the faces of over 800 students during the Festival of the Sacred is a sight to behold. Each school takes part in eight weeks of workshops in their individual school settings in preparation for performance day, when it all comes together in spectacular style.

With a variety of songs ranging from the sublime to the upbeat, the students sing, dance and present their way through two hours of pure entertainment. The Festival of the Sacred, as the name suggests, has a divine feel to it and the Liturgy of the Word which precedes the festival is as much a part of the day as the vocal and musical performances.

This year's opening number involves all students in a traditional South African song, Siyahamba (marching in the light of God). The song begins with an African drum beat and a solo performance by a secondary student from each Deanery before the voices of the entire children's choir fills the venue. Choreographed movement accompanies the choral performance as the students provide dramatic actions to bring the performance to life.

The a3- Australian Arts Alive tutors are exceptionally gifted teachers who make the learning process fun whilst getting the most out of the students' performance. Students who have vocal ability are given the chance to perform solos whilst other students are involved in the liturgy, public speaking, dancing, gymnastics, and even "rapping".

The Festival, now in its third year continues to grow in scope and variety, incorporating new elements each year in order to give students as many opportunities as possible to be involved. The Festival delivers an uplifting and inspirational display of beautiful young voices, some realizing for the first time the beauty and power of The Arts, others discovering a love of performance which will last a lifetime.





Jubilarians

There are few professions today where employees can boast 25 years plus in the one job, but Catholic Education Sandhurst proudly celebrates this event each year with 15-20 Jubilarians taking part annually. The commitment of these people is extraordinary, with many responsible for the education of over 600 students during their careers.

Most of us end up with no more than five or six people who remember us. Teachers have thousands of people who remember them for the rest of their lives

Andy Rooney

The Jubilarian concept has a rich tradition in Catholic life in celebrating silver and golden anniversaries of ordinations, professions, ministry and service in the Church's missionary activities. The Diocese of Sandhurst extends this laudatory practice to teachers and ancillary staff in the schools within the Diocese.

The promotion of Jubilarians acknowledges the years of service of these dedicated and long serving people, and on Sandhurst's night of nights, hundreds gather to honour those who have given 25 years' service to Catholic Education.

This year's celebrations commenced at St Kilian's Church in Bendigo with a Jubilarian Mass, it is here that the recipients received a badge and certificate to commemorate the occasion presented by Diocesan Administrator, Monsignor Frank Marriott. The Jubilarian Mass was also the setting for the annual Bishop Noel Daly Award for Outstanding Service to Leadership in Catholic Education.

As the celebrations move to the Bendigo Town hall each Jubilarian is honoured in a tribute from a colleague, celebrating the individual contribution to Catholic Education over 25 years. Director of Catholic Education Ms Phil Billington said each Jubilarian was a valued member of the Sandhurst community.

"Catholic Education Sandhurst thanks the 2011 Jubilarians for their passion and commitment which has made a difference in many lives over countless years. We thank you for your perseverance – some of you have seen many changes in education, in resourcing, in accountability requirements, in compliance and through it all you have continued to embody hope in the lives of the students and the communities in

which you have served. We thank your families who have contributed enormously to Catholic Education Sandhurst through their love and active support of you and your ministry," said Phil.

The W.P. 'Bill' Reid Memorial Address, inaugurated in 2005 in memory of Bill Reid who served Catholic Education across four dioceses in a variety of leadership roles, was presented by Vice Chancellor of Australian Catholic University, Professor Anne Cummins at the Jubilarian dinner. Professor Cummins reflected on the mission and ministry of Catholic Education, past, present and future and the rewarding aspects of Catholic Educational service.

The annual Jubilarian celebration expresses the deep gratitude of the Sandhurst community to these people who have given so generously of their time and talents over many years. We congratulate the 16 Sandhurst Jubilarians for 2011.

2011 Jubilarians

Mr Peter Chalkley - Notre Dame College, Shepparton

Ms Cheryl Connally - Holy Rosary, Heathcote
(retired end of 2010)

Ms Susanne Deane - St Joseph's Nagambie and
St Mary's Rushworth

Mr Noel Dillon - St. Joseph's, Quarry Hill

Mr Brendan Gallagher - St Therese's, Kennington

Ms Maree Geisler - Notre Dame College, Shepparton

Ms Gabrielle Hogan - St Mary's, Echuca

Mr Kym Levett - Catholic College Bendigo

Mr Peter O'Connell - St Mary's, Echuca

Ms Trish Plowman - St Mary's, Echuca

Mr David Purdy - Catholic Education Office, Bendigo

Mr Paul Richardson - St Augustine's College, Kyabram

Ms Faye Roberts - St Augustine's College, Kyabram

Mr John Russell - Doxa School, Bendigo

Ms Angela Wharton - St. Peter's, North Bendigo

Ms Heather White - St Mary's, Inglewood



Sandhurst Celebrates

Local indigenous leader, Aunty Melva Johnson was awarded the prestigious 2011 Bishop Noel Daly Award for outstanding service to leadership in Catholic education, becoming the first Indigenous leader to receive the award.

Aunty Melva Johnson is a Yorta Yorta/Wemba Wemba elder and an inspirational leader of her people. Born into an era where there were no rights for Aboriginal people, Aunty Melva became actively involved in Koorie education in 1974 as a member of the Echuca Aboriginal Cooperative and in 1976, with other members of the community began the Echuca Education Group.

Blessed with great dignity, Aunty Melva has always been passionate about good education for indigenous students and has encouraged the young ones of the district to do their best and be their best no matter which school they attended. Director of Catholic Education Ms Phil Billington said Aunty Melva is an exemplary advocate for her people and a worthy recipient of the Bishop Noel Daly Award for 2011.

"Aunty Melva Johnson has gifted Catholic Education in Sandhurst with her leadership, passion, encouragement, generosity of spirit and competence – we are an enriched Catholic education system because of Aunty Melva Johnson. Her legacy will live on for countless generations of all Australians," said Ms Billington.



Bishop Noel Daly Award



Educaré

The Educaré Award was inaugurated by the SSEB in 2009 to recognise teachers in our schools who have made an outstanding contribution to Classroom Teaching and Curriculum Innovation. The award seeks to acknowledge in Catholic Education the importance of the daily and ongoing quality work which needs to take place in our classrooms. Working within the life-giving environment of the mission of our Catholic schools, the award defines excellence as an ability to generate hope and optimism, an ability to bring out the best in students and an ability to go beyond one's own classroom to positively influence colleagues. The recipients of the Educaré Award for 2011 are:

Rosemary Horridge

Rosemary Horridge is a long standing and highly respected staff member of St Mel's Catholic Primary School Shepparton South, having been a teacher there since 1979. Rosemary was one of the first teachers to train as a Reading Recovery Teacher and was instrumental in leading Sandhurst schools in the implementation of this program. Rosie also was one of the first teachers trained in WA First Steps and was willing to facilitate other teachers in this program across the diocese. In recent years Rosemary has been at the forefront of St Mel's approach to inquiry learning and play-based curriculum. Her contribution to the teaching profession throughout her career has been outstanding and her influence on the lives of colleagues and children has been remarkable.

Debbie Saunders & Gavin Dykes (Joint Nomination)

Educators Debbie Saunders and former Deputy Principal of FCJ Gavin Dykes were instrumental in delivering the ambitious 1:1 laptop program at FCJ College Benalla, implemented from Years 7 – 10 and optional for Years 11 – 12 in 2010. As leaders of the 1:1 program, Debbie and Gavin planned the innovative approach, modelled a commitment to the integration of learning technologies across the curriculum, provided strong support and timely challenges to teachers as they embraced the pedagogical changes and worked with students and families to ensure that the initiative resulted in more engaged learners across the College. Gavin is currently Deputy Principal at Notre Dame College, Shepparton and Debbie Saunders remains ICT Co-ordinator, a teacher of Mathematics and Religious Education, Social Justice Co-ordinator and Library Co-ordinator at FCJ College, Benalla.



Snapshot



Frayne Speech Festival

On Friday August 26 Mercy school students from across Victoria gathered at Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg for the 2011 Frayne Speech Festival. The Festival was inaugurated in 1996 to recognise the contribution of the Sisters of Mercy to education. Mercy schools take turn at hosting the annual event at which students exhibit their extraordinary talents in the areas of debating, public speaking and voice choir. Catholic College Bendigo represented Sandhurst in sensational style at the festival winning awards in all sections. The CCB Voice Choir was awarded the silver medal after a close final against the host school, Our Lady of Mercy College, Heidelberg. Students Hannah Carr (year 11) and Jacob O'Connor (year 12) were recognised for

their talents in the areas of public speaking and debating with Hannah awarded best speaker in the debating competition and Jacob receiving runner up for the second year in a row in the public speaking section. Congratulations to all the students who competed with such pride in their schools and supported each other in true Mercy spirit at the festival.



Lodestones - A New Chapter



Former Director of Catholic Education, Mr Denis Higgins can now add "Author" to his many professional achievements. Denis' debut book "Lodestones - Leadership from the Furnaces and Viking Raiding ships" is about educational leadership, relationships and an enduring passion for teaching. An official book launch took place at the Catholic Education Office on Friday August 5 where colleagues and friends shared the significant occasion with Denis and his family. With years of experience as a teacher, principal, educational consultant and director of Catholic Education, Denis displays his passion for education particularly in the areas of leadership development, teacher and student learning, governance and relationships. *Lodestones* is a true representation of a life time in education. It explores the courage, humility and reality required to be not just a good teacher but a great teacher who is constantly developing better practices in order to authentically engage young people in learning. *Lodestones* navigates new territory in the area of educational leadership that will evoke, incite and challenge readers.

Denis' book is available to order by contacting the Catholic Education Office at 120 Hargreaves St Bendigo, phone (03) 5443 2377.

of Sandhurst

Audrey Brown

Ms Audrey Brown had been appointed as the new Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese of Ballarat to commence in January 2012.

During her years in the Sandhurst Diocese Audrey has fulfilled the roles of teacher and various leadership roles within Catholic College Bendigo, Principal at Catholic College Wodonga and the roles of Education Officer, Senior Education Officer and Senior Educational Consultant at the Catholic Education Office. During this time Audrey has contributed in a very significant way to the development of School Boards, the development of the Sandhurst Governance Charter, the Sandhurst School Improvement Framework, Leadership Development (including the very successful Country Diocesan Leadership Program CDLP), the development of the Sandhurst School Review process and the core role of working directly with Secondary Principals and Leadership Teams.

Throughout this extraordinary contribution to Sandhurst Audrey has always been available, hard working, reliable and a person of integrity and faith – we will miss her but we are delighted that the Diocese of Ballarat will benefit from her leadership and experience.

We congratulate Audrey and we wish her well whilst at the same time being very grateful for her leadership and contribution to the Sandhurst Diocese in a variety of roles over many years.



Jim Rolfe

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we pay tribute to Jim Rolfe who will retire at the end of 2011. Jim's retirement signifies the completion of an extraordinary career of service to education in general and Catholic education in particular, dating from 1974.

Jim's service to education has been exemplary. He is held with deep respect by teachers, students, parents, peers as well as educators beyond the diocese. Jim is an unassuming, quiet, informed and wise educator who has given so generously of himself in a number of different settings and classroom and leadership roles. He has gained the unqualified respect of the priests and religious with whom he has worked and the gratitude of the late Bishops Noel Daly and Joseph Grech.

Jim is a core part of the fabric of Catholic education in Sandhurst and over the years he has served not only the school communities of St Peter's North Bendigo, Holy Rosary White Hills, St Brendan's Shepparton and St Therese's Kennington but also the broader community of Catholic education and the Sandhurst diocesan community. Jim's leadership of each of the schools he served in as Principal has ensured growth in educational outcomes, teachers' professionalism and faith development.

Jim has been an influential member of the SSEB and he has represented Sandhurst exceptionally on inter-diocesan bodies and state committees. Jim's contribution to the Leadership Team of the CEO during the past eight years has been instrumental in our current capacity for growth, development and informed and faith-filled service of the Diocesan community.



St Pat's leads the way



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School in the small rural township of Pyramid Hill has become the first Catholic School in Victoria to be awarded a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Grant. St Patrick's is one of 50 new schools to be chosen to join the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National Program, funded by the Australian Government. The significant grant will see the school receive \$54,000 for garden and kitchen infrastructure as part of the program.

Principal of St Patrick's Primary School, Mr Jim Waight said he was thrilled with the announcement. "This is fantastic news for our school. It is an opportunity for us to involve the community in the life of our school. Learning and teaching will be transformed allowing for child centred, hands on experiences. Lifelong values and skills will be gained through this wonderful opportunity."

The 50 successful schools were announced on 17 October by Stephanie Alexander in Melbourne. "This program has really opened up kids eyes when it comes to the joys of fresh food - we're teaching them that tasty, fresh food can be both fun and good for you," said Stephanie. St Patrick's school students are looking forward to growing and cooking their own seasonal vegetables and fruits and educating their community about the benefits of healthy eating.

A Journey of Solidarity

Alternative Schoolies

The completion of some 13 years of schooling is an achievement worth celebrating and two weeks of immersion in the Philippines, a majority world country, provides a challenging and rewarding opportunity to mark the occasion with a difference. A journey of solidarity with the people of one of Asia's poorest countries, the trip aims to expand thinking, to give an introduction to a global world, to provide the chance to take some action for change and perhaps most importantly speak to the heart.

Catholic Education Sandhurst has sponsored Alternative Schoolies since 2007 with the original inspiration coming from Kate Fogarty who was the leader of Catholic Identity at Catholic College Bendigo at the time. Support for the program from Catholic College was critical in the early years.

It is now very much a diocesan program drawing participants from most secondary colleges across all deaneries. The Alternative Schoolies journey to the Philippines presents an opportunity to discover first hand what life is like for others and there are always many blessings and also some confronting realities in store.

The University of San Carlos plays host for the Alternative Schoolies, organizing a busy itinerary of visiting, meeting the locals and where possible, rolling the sleeves up to do some practical work. Fr John lacona is one special person we encounter on this trip. He has accomplished much for the poor in the Philippines and his work provides a beacon of hope and a challenging example of what it means to be a follower of Christ.

The Bethlehem Day Care centre in Cebu was set up by Fr John and it now provides education and food for over two hundred children who live on one of the city's rubbish tips. The children's parents are scavengers and they often enlist the labour of their children to help make ends meet. This is one of the places the Alternative Schoolies group visit and have supported through their fundraising efforts back in Australia.

Raddy Diola was another inspiring individual that the group meet in 2010. His work as a real estate developer took him to a little-known community in the city of Cebu, Kalunasan in 2005. The local people had very little. Raddy appealed to business connections for funds and organized the local community to do the work needed to install running water to homes and the school. The local school was greatly neglected so on-going work has seen gradual improvement of buildings and basic resources. Because malnutrition is pervasive in the community Raddy has established a food program.

The need of these communities is great, but for the students who choose an alternative way to celebrate their thirteen year education journey, the rewards are great too. This is a trip that students remember forever, a worthwhile contribution to social justice and a chance to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

Michael Crowe



There are many other places we visit in Cebu where there is great need. The Schoolies group have visited and donated funds that they have raised in their local communities to the following organizations:

Missionaries of Charity - an orphanage for babies & children that cannot be supported by their families because they have fallen into extreme poverty.

Asilo De La Milagrossa - an orphanage for abandoned children

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Integrated Development Center (JPIC-IDC) – a program to move families living on a dump-site to sustainable housing.

Abellana National High School – a public school with great needs.

Youth Links – vocational training for youth with no job prospects.

Alternative Schoolies 2011

"Spending two thousand dollars on schoolies in Australia, or on making a difference. It's a no-brainer really."

This comment was heard quite a few times from some of this year's participants as we went round the group asking why they had committed themselves to this trip on our recent preparation day. It has become quite apparent also that some group members had made this commitment way back in Year 9 or Year 10 through their involvement in other Sandhurst social justice activities.

This year 15 young people from six different Sandhurst schools will be travelling to Cebu in early December for the Alternative Schoolies immersion experience. Co-leaders for the trip are Maria O'Donnell from Catholic College Bendigo and David Walker from the Catholic Education Office.

One of last year's participants, Hannah Featherstone from Bendigo, will be returning as Youth Leader.

Student participants are Alyce Saunders, Larissa Fabbri, Emma Owen, Nathaniel Ruff, Sam Miles-Forbes, Jesse Leonard-Shannon, Ingrid Thomson, Mollie Connelly and Rebekah Skahill, all from CCB, Prue Gurnick and Indianna Symons from St Joseph's College Echuca, Emma Hancock from Marian College Myrtleford, Matthew Heard from St Augustine's College Kyabram, Danielle Sullivan from Notre Dame College Shepparton and Brittany Crofts from Yarrawonga.

A preparation day held on Saturday September 3 was a very enjoyable first gathering and included lots of "getting to know you" activities, briefings on essential information and learning from the experience of past participants. Group members spent some time journaling about their expectations for the trip followed by singing practice, because they know how much their hosts enjoy singing and dancing and that they will be asked to respond.

Participants leave for Alternative Schoolies on 4 December, 2011.

David Walker

Sandhurst Colleges Respond

Sandhurst is committed to developing the social justice conscience of our young people grounded in the Gospel and social justice teachings of the Church. Eight of the Secondary Colleges conduct at least one immersion trip each year. Three Colleges conduct more than one. All of the Colleges have students involved in either the Sandhurst Alternative Schoolies Program or other programs through their religious congregations. FCJ Benalla have been involved in past AS trips and Marian Myrtleford have their first student going this year. The year levels involved are typically 9 to 11.

Four of the immersions are to overseas countries including East Timor (2), Fiji and Samoa. Five immersions spend time in indigenous communities at Broome (Lombadina/Beagle Bay/One Arm Point), Santa Teresa, Wyndham, Bathurst Island and Alice Springs. Two of these trips are part of the school's REMAR program and are undertaken by their Blue (i.e. Year 11) rowers. Generally the immersion experiences are of 10 – 14 days duration.

These immersions are not only a critical part of the students' development but also that of the teachers and staff and parents who accompany them. The growth and maturity of all involved is tangible and serves to ensure young people and adults with a social conscience and a deeper awareness of the work of the Church



Philippines

A country of extremes

by Amy Brett & Emma Laby

On Wednesday the 21st September, sixteen excited, somewhat anxious and weary teachers from the Goulburn Valley Deanery departed for Cebu in the Philippines to begin a ten day Social Justice Immersion experience, the sixth group of early career teachers to travel to Cebu as a part of a Sandhurst-Philippines partnership. Included in the group were Parish Priest, Father Tony Shallue, Catholic Education Sandhurst Deputy Director, Brenda Keenan and fourteen teachers from various schools across the diocese.

After a long trip and a series of minor delays the group arrived in Cebu where they were warmly greeted by their hosts from the University of San Carlos. Father Louie Punzalun, Rosella and Rosie, the tour coordinators, and Baancali, the intrepid bus driver, were to cater for the group's every need over the next ten days. The accommodation at USC Retreat House, was set at the top of a mountain overlooking the university and the city of Cebu. During the next ten days they would get to know each other and many friendly Filipinos as the group was guided through a series of rewarding, challenging and, at times, confronting experiences. Some of the activities the Philippines Social Immersion participants took part in are outlined below.

- The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation - Integrated Development Center (JPIC-IDC), led by Father Eugene Docoy, took the group to visit the Barangay Bangkal Dumpsite where they met children and staff of the pre-school, the housing project and those living on the dumpsite. Participants were also given the opportunity to visit a fishing village where they gained further insight and understanding of the range of ways in which Filipino's support their families. Another worthwhile project run by JPIC-IDC was the Mountain Village Housing Community Project, an amazing project and village site where the Sandhurst group cleared an area for new growth and development.
- Youthlink, established and coordinated by the youngest Monsignor in the Philippines, Monsignor Arturo Novales, welcomed participants for an afternoon of interaction with students. A number of students of Youthlink proudly explained the valuable programs that their non-for-profit organisation has on offer, including the skill development and employment assistance for

the youth of Cebu. It became apparent that tertiary education is extremely expensive in the Philippines, and that only a select few are privileged to receive higher education. Programs such as this one are vital for the future of the youth of the Philippines.

- Orphanages – Asilo dela Milagrosa and Missionaries of Charity. Opportunities were provided to visit two orphanages whilst in Cebu. The group expressed what a privilege and honour it was to meet the sisters and staff running these centres – a humbling experience with children of all ages and stages of life.
- Bohol – On Sunday the 25th September the Philippines Social Immersion participants departed on a fast ferry for Bohol Island to enjoy a few hours of swimming at a tourist resort. After lunch they were treated to a 'jiggling' bus tour of the island including a visit to the Tarsier Conservation Park – an opportunity to get up close and personal with these 'cute' little creatures.
- San Isidro Primary and Secondary School – class observations, teaching and interaction with the students of San Isidro, Cebu. A wonderful and insightful experience for early career teachers to work with students from another country.
- Bethlehem Day Care Centre / Inayawan Dumpsite and St. Pio Village. Father John Iacono (known to many across the Sandhurst Diocese) hosted visits to Bethlehem Day Care, the local dumpsite, Saint Pio Village and one of the city cemeteries. This was a great opportunity to interact with children and families and to see the progress that has occurred with a number of these important community development projects. Significant fundraising has occurred across the Sandhurst Diocese to support Father John and many of the projects he is currently involved with. It was invaluable for participants to witness the impact that the Sandhurst Diocese continues to have on the lives of many that they were fortunate enough to meet and visit.



Amy Brett & Emma Laby who were part of the Sandhurst group said that whilst it was difficult to articulate, their recent journey was most successful on many levels and they were extremely appreciative of the incredible hospitality of their Filipino friends.

"We arrived home in Australia with some unbelievable memories, many enduring questions and openness to new ways of being, knowing and doing. Our ongoing commitment to social justice through awareness, education and action was certainly enriched by this experience," said Amy and Emma.

"The University of San Carlos was our host for the ten day immersion experience and during the course of our trip provided ample opportunity to visit a number of organisations, housing projects, fishing villages, orphanages, schools, dump sites and the like. Our thanks are extended to the many members of our school communities for their donations of stationery, toys and for financial support which we distributed to the following organisations."

- *Asilo dela Milagrosa Orphanage*
- *Missionaries of Charity Orphanage*
- *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation - Integrated Development Centre*
- *Archdiocesan Youthlink*
- *San Isidro Parish School*
- *Bethlehem Day Care Center (Father John Iacono)*

"Finally, our thanks are extended to Catholic Education Sandhurst for providing this opportunity, in many ways a life changing experience for us all."



Illawong on Eppalock



It is a vast cry from the dry shores of recent years at Lake Eppalock near Bendigo, 18 months ago you would be forgiven for thinking that the drought affected region would ever return to the oasis that it once was, a vibrant water sports destination filled with campers, fishermen and boating enthusiasts. After reaching a record low of only three percent water, Eppalock was a barren and uninviting place with few prospects. But that was before the rains came, filling the reservoir to overflowing proportions and returning the lake to a place of beauty and hope.

Nestled amongst the natural bushland on the shores of Eppalock is the former Lions Club Camp - Illawong. Its history dates back to 1976 when it was established as a camp for youth and community. In December 2009 Catholic Education Sandhurst acquired the lease for Illawong, refurbishing the facilities to create a unique educational destination committed to retaining the philosophy established by the Lions Clubs over thirty years ago.

Illawong on Eppalock, as it is now known, provides an individual learning environment for students and teachers, the natural bushland and the tranquillity of the setting enhance teaching and learning in the area of sustainability and provides a quiet place for retreats and self-reflection.

The day facilities, set on four hectares of natural bush with access to Lake Eppalock foreshore includes a large gathering area with kitchen, barbeque area, toilets and showers incorporating disabled facilities.

This place is abundant with natural flora and fauna, it has a serenity about it that makes for the perfect outdoor classroom, the facilities give shelter and convenience but the true value of Illawong on Eppalock is the tranquillity and rawness of the natural Australian bush and the vast reservoir which gives life to the region.

The vision for Illawong is to establish the site as a popular destination for school groups, retreats, day

programs and for sustainability activities. Doxa School in Bendigo is already utilising Illawong on Eppalock with a program aimed at providing a unique learning environment for boys and girls aged between 11 and 15 years.

Doxa School has been involved with the site since Catholic Education Sandhurst took over Illawong at the end of 2009. The weekly program incorporates maths, science, environmental and orienteering style activities which promote problem solving, team development and social skills. All Doxa students are able to spend time at Illawong twice each term to take part in the activities; a partnership with Latrobe University enables Outdoor Education students to run accredited courses with the students.

The Doxa students have been instrumental in enhancing the Illawong site through the development of the native bush garden, building a picnic table for the refurbished BBQ area which they helped restore and tidying the bush site.

A recent open day at Illawong on Eppalock invited educators from all schools across the region to visit the site, engage in environmental activities and be involved in discussions about how Illawong might best serve local schools. A large group of teachers from Catholic College Bendigo took part in the activities enjoying the tranquility of the region and the relaxing atmosphere that Illawong offers. The teachers were able to see how student programs could be facilitated on the banks of Lake Eppalock and amongst the natural bush surrounds. The Sandhurst Sustainable Schools Project has also been facilitated at Illawong as part of the ResourceSmart Roadshows.

The future of Illawong is steeped in the history of its origins; it was a camp created for youth and community enjoyment and will remain dedicated to its original intentions. The 35 year history of Illawong is set to continue well into the future as it grows as a destination for education, retreats and reflection, continuing to provide a place of beauty for those who choose to visit this unique region.



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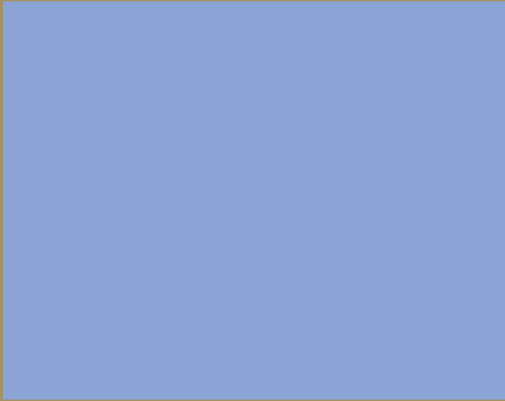
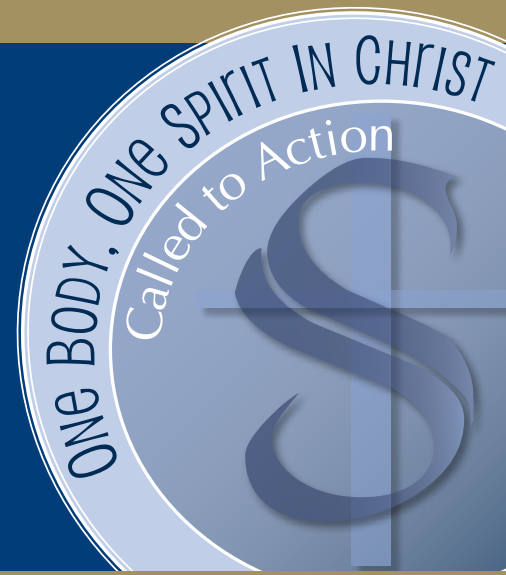


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This Spirit of Sandhurst magazine captures the spirit of Catholic Education in the Sandhurst Diocese - its uniqueness, vibrancy, innovation and commitment to enhancing the lives of its students, families and teachers.