



KILLESTER COLLEGE
ALUMNI
NETWORK

NETWORK

Edition-June 2017

NEWS

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Welcome to the June 2017 edition of this year's Alumni newsletter.

I hope you are all keeping warm as winter descends upon us. This year is moving very quickly and I am amazed that I have clocked up 30 years already at Killester.

What has been particularly gratifying over the past few years is to see so many past students enrol their own daughters here. As generations move through our gates, there is a deep sense of community and connection. I hope this is the experience that continues for you as you reconnect through Alumni events.

Best wishes

Leanne Di Stefano
PRINCIPAL



PALM SUNDAY ON A BALMY AFTERNOON

Protests can be intimidating, especially if you have never been to one before. Four of our students, Rosemary, Jennifer, Joanna and Christina, were courageous enough to join the Justice and Democracy staff to show support for refugees and asylum seekers.

As we travelled into the Palm Sunday rally on the train, we were a little disheartened that the weather wasn't in our favour, as we thought such weather would affect the turnout for the day. The news of the shaky "refugee - US" deal had created further uncertainty for the people in offshore detention and for those who were supporting them. A good show of numbers was important for this event.

As we waited at our meeting point at Melbourne Central, our optimism returned, as we watched a flood of spirited people making their way to the frontline of the protest at the State Library. Purple clad grandmothers (Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children), teenagers and children with home-made placards, people from the country and many more passionate advocates, made their way, despite the cold, rainy Sunday. We were inspired by their passion for this cause.

We joined a shivering crowd of people, including our friends from the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project, and other schools, including Kilbreda. Just being surrounded with fellow supporters rejuvenated our sense of purpose. Everyone was enlightened by the many speeches from refugees and advocates alike.

"Hearing speeches from the refugees, sharing their stories, opened up our eyes to the countless lives of those who are left unknowing and lost in detention centres, as well as the endless families that are separated from each other," Rosemary said.

One of the speeches was by a representative from RISE (Refugee Survivors and Ex-detainees). She spoke very passionately about the lack of inclusion when advocates create organisations and events, with little or no collaboration with refugees and ex-detainees themselves, who are at the heart of this issue. This is an example of where subsidiarity needs to be put in practice and we must all ask ourselves "Who's going to benefit?" when taking action for social justice.

We heard many stories of suffering and bravery. A nurse who worked on Nauru told us of the squalid conditions people are living in and the absence of adequate health care. "These people are being mentally tortured by our government," she said. As a nurse, she has a duty of care and must do no harm. As teachers, our responsibility is to educate and inspire. We have the opportunity to help young people grow and learn. Teachers are also under obligation to protect children and report abuse. This is the core of our profession and the core of humanity.

Continued

When the speeches were over we walked through the streets of Melbourne in an expression of solidarity with people in detention. It felt good to be taking some form of action, even if it was only to raise awareness of this issue.



Killester is a school that benefits from diversity and we are proud to belong to a place that welcomes all, including the most vulnerable. Our values of Strength and Kindness run strong in our students and staff – and Australia, right now, could truly benefit from these values.

As teachers and human beings I cannot ignore the suffering of other people, particularly young people who, in different circumstances, could be students in our classrooms. They would come to school, chat at lunchtimes and put off their homework and grow and learn, just like many of Killester's students.



This year is the year of "Courage". Our students grow in strength and kindness, while young refugees have no such education or nurturing. We must have the courage to talk about this among ourselves and to those who don't want to listen.

The Brigantine Asylum Seeker Project (BASP) website has resources and information, so let us read and talk about it. The Killester community looks out for each other, and we believe we can extend this kindness to our fellow students who cannot be learning with us. Give hope to each other and keep talking. Even one conversation can be a snowflake in an avalanche.

Maree Edwards and Jess Hackett

JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY 2017

The theme for the 2017 Justice and Democracy Seminar Day was Reconciliation. This year marked the 50 year anniversary of the 1967 Referendum, when 90% of Australian voters said 'yes' for Aboriginal people to be counted in the census. Students from several Kildare Ministries schools came together to learn about Reconciliation. Our day began with a prayer and an acknowledgement of country before our first guest speaker, Mark Clarke, Executive Officer, Office for Justice and Peace, asked everyone to take off a shoe and walk around the room. Students were quick to put their shoe back on, even though they were never instructed to do so. The reason for this was that they were "uncomfortable" with only one shoe and felt the need to rectify the situation. "Aha!" Mark said, and he proceeded to tell his audience of the former and current treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which made us all very uncomfortable and inspired to take action for change.

Delsie Lillyst (gunditjmara and Bunitj), Catholic Education Melbourne, held an engaging workshop which the students found confronting and inspiring. They formed their own tribal groups, made their own flags and dances, only to have all their hard work destroyed. As the students tried to repair the torn pieces of paper flags they realised that what they had would never be the same.

Luckily, lunchtime arrived to rejuvenate saddened spirits and allow everyone time to reflect and enjoy a delicious meal, prepared by Killester's VET Hospitality students. The mood was quick to pick up, with the help of some live music.



Refuelled and determined to "take the next steps" the students brainstormed and shared their plans for Reconciliation week back at their own schools. Their passion for the cause shone through and there was no doubt that they would be role model advocates among their peers.

Thank you to the Year 11 and 12 Justice and Democracy students who spend countless lunchtimes to organise this important day. Thank you to all involved who helped make this day a success.

Jessica Hackett, Performing Arts Learning Area Leader

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

CLASS OF 71 - 76 REUNION REPORT

'FABULOUS AT 40'

Who would believe that all these lovely women have evolved from our group? Well, actually it isn't all that surprising, as the nice thing about the day was that we all realised that we are all still the same girls, with the same qualities that we liked all those years ago.



It was a bit of a late decision to arrange the reunion, by Jenny Wright (Bourke), Jacinta Kropman (Compton) and myself, Marita Suhr (Smith), following from some comments last year at the bigger grouping get-together at Killester's 60 year celebrations. None of us were particularly "reunionish" people and, in fact, our year level has not attempted many at all. My hesitations about reunions would have been that it is a bit of a success barometer for professions, families, relationships etc and that, really, do we need to stress and put ourselves out there for this? However, this was so not the case. Whatever happens, "is what it is", and it was nice to just step back in time a bit and catch up with old friends.



My 15 year old daughter posed the observation, "Well if they were such good friends, why didn't you just keep up?" A good observation from the techno-savvy from the era of a "Festival of Oversharing" (a recent Tim Winton quote). How different it was when you went Nursing to do shift work and compulsory living in at the nurse's home and some of your close school friends went to Frankston to Teachers' College. No computers, Facebook, no mobile phones and, you even had to do coins for public phones. And then... when you travelled overseas for the big discovery trip, the affordable, snail mail, only just kept our families satisfied. (No Skype or internet banking to help us out!) I am sure it wasn't something that any of us gave much thought to, it is just the way it was. How nice that, now that we have rekindled old friendships, it will be so much easier to maintain them. Another observation that I made from our day was that some girls that I had been close to at school had had similar journeys as my own, regarding travels, work, relationships or sporting interests.



It was sad to hear of some girls who have had poor health and even died but, again, we may not have heard of these had it not been for the reunion being organised. Since the reunion, others, as well as myself, have also caught up with friends that couldn't make the reunion day. This would not have happened without the contact made for the reunion. So, I would encourage any other year levels to not hold back on the idea and to organise as early as you can to get maximum attendance. Many

thanks to Jess Wright-Rees (Jenny's daughter), for creating our invite, and to Loreto Cannon, Kylie Taberner and the generous students for giving us their time and valued assistance on the day.



'CLASS OF 2016'

After months of organising and negotiating the date and time of our reunion over Facebook, Sunday 9th October, 2016 had come. It had been ten years since we had walked out of the gates of Killester, as young ambitious women, ready to start a new chapter and enter the big wide world of adulthood.

It was a surreal feeling with all the memories flooding back as we passed through the gates of the place where we spent the majority of our teenage years, the friendships we lived for, the heart throb boys we once thought were our one true loves, the classroom banter, and the great late-night weekend parties and gossip that followed.

There were roughly about twenty-five Class of 2006 Killester Girls who were able to meet. We were met by a familiar face, our old Year 12 Coordinator, Mr McPhail (I still can't call him Steve) who had not changed a bit, such a character, always able to make you laugh. It was so exciting seeing all the old faces, but even though lots of us had not seen each other for years, it felt as though it was just yesterday that we had left and we were all teenagers again. Jessica Field had brought along some fantastic old photo albums of old Brigidine days, camps and birthday party photos which were an absolute classic.

After reuniting and mingling for a bit, it was time to take a walk down memory lane with a school tour. We started the tour off in the old Year 7 classrooms. Although there were many changes, there was a lot we still remembered. It was fascinating seeing how teaching and schooling had changed in the last ten years: the new massive science discovery centre, the new open plan Year 9 classrooms and the tailored education they received. It was fabulous to see how passionate Mr McPhail was about teaching to the individual education needs of all the students. It really made us a bit jealous about how lucky the girls were to be surrounded by such new and impressive technology and facilities.

After the tour we returned back to Kennedy Hall for a bit of celebratory 10 Year Reunion coffee and cake. We thanked Mr McPhail for taking the time out of his weekend to help us celebrate our reunion. We continued to share stories and catch up on each other's lives, our jobs, who was married, who had children, where we had travelled and our life experiences. It was such a beautiful afternoon, a trip down memory lane and we look forward to our 20 year reunion.

Sarah Cochrane (Douglas) and Kristen De Koning (McLean) Class of 2006



Class of 1996
50 years
**REUNION
REPORT**

CLASS OF 1996

On Saturday 5 November 2016 about 40 students who graduated in 1996 gathered for their twenty year reunion. It was amazing to see familiar faces that we used to see pretty much daily for six years, but who we had not seen for 20 years!

We met in the staff room and very quickly starting chatting away. It got LOUD very quickly with lots of happy chatter! It was nice to hear what has been going on each other's lives for the past 20 years! We learned we all had taken different paths and it was so nice to see so many people healthy and happy. Some of us had kids, some were expecting their first baby, we even discovered some were already grandmothers! We also opened our time capsule and had lots of laughs about the contents in there. One ex-student had her 10 year old daughter there and when an old tape deck was pulled out she called out, "What is that!" Gave us all a laugh and made us feel old all at once haha!



In 1996 Ms Doko was our Year 12 Coordinator and she was there to give us a tour of the school, it was so nice to see her again. Much has changed but there were still lots of familiar areas too. It was funny that certain smells, like the home eco room and science labs, brought us back to our days in those rooms! All arvo you could hear "do you remember this" and "do you remember that". Lots of happy memories were brought back as we strolled the school grounds.

If you ever get a chance to go to your reunion I highly recommend it! It really was a great afternoon with old friendships rekindled and new ones formed. Time goes past so quickly and it was so nice to touch base with our past.

Thank you Killester for the memories and thank you for opening the school once again to us. Class of 1996.

STAFF OF 2017 AND ALUMNI MEMBERS



Back Row: *Desiree De Waal, Clare Compton, Anna Miha, Lily Di Bari, Sandy Kokoszka, Jessica Hackett*
Front Row: *Simone Ferreira, Louise Harmes, Kate Fox, Fiona Chau, Emma Neville, Lynn Diep, Isabelle Maroun, Jennifer Cheong-Lan*

The Family Learning Centre (FLC) at Killester continues to provide support and new learning opportunities for families in our community. The philosophy stemmed from the context of being an “outward facing school”, encompassing the Brigidine tradition of building community and reaching out, particularly to those who were vulnerable.

What is the aim of the Family Learning Centre? It is a place where parents are welcome and have an opportunity to engage with the schools, its teachers and leaders.

It provides a meeting place to share valuable information about education to help build parents skills and provide new learning opportunities

In 2017 the main events so far have been;

1. Conversational English classes. Run by Jacqui Adams, a tutor from AMES. Approximately twelve parents meet every Monday morning for two hours to improve their English.
2. Certificate 3 Business Course. This was formed in partnership with the Technology Institute of Victoria to offer our community this nationally accredited course. This is open to parents and other members of their families. The Semester One course concluded recently in May and our plans are to commence another course in Semester Two.
3. Using the Apple Mac computers effectively at home. All students own and use a computer daily in their learning. Some parents have found this whole area challenging and often have many questions about homework, safety on the internet and distractions due to social media are typical issues.

Community Conversations are generally held once per term. These are meetings with parents and school leaders, designed to promote two way conversations which build the partnership with our families. Over the past five years at Killester we have used this innovative approach to engage with our parents.

Community Conversations provide a process that extends and develops those informal moments, and builds and changes relationships within the community. The process involves having intentional and inclusive conversations between members of the community, in which participants listen to each other, in order to understand and explore what is important to and valued by that community. The process aims to develop and build respectful relationships within the school community, through interactions in which listening is as important as talking.

Such engagement relies on strong and trusting relationships between key players in schools. Where schools have successfully changed and built these relationships, research has shown that school outcomes improve. Community Conversations aim to build strong, safe and trusting relationships within school communities, through changing the ways in which dialogue occurs between the school and its community.

Our first meeting of this type for 2017 was held on May 11th, where the focus was on the Year 7 parents, “How can you make the best start at Killester?”

The next one will be around the theme of supporting families with children who have physical or learning disabilities, to be held in Term 3.

Parents, when surveyed, have requested we run Computer classes to develop basic skills. We run a few each term, depending on demand. We use past students with IT skills to act as volunteer tutors. Many thanks to those of you in the Alumni group who generously volunteered recently when we sent out our request. We appreciate very much your willingness to help our parents in this way and your enthusiasm in supporting the school community.

International research is compelling. Many studies across the world have demonstrated the link that parent engagement in their child’s learning is not a luxury but a necessity. We are aware that these partnerships build strong learning communities. This is our focus at the Killester College Family Learning Centre.

Roger van Langenberg, Sr.Helen Toohey and Loreto Cannon (Family Learning Centre Team)

CURRENT STUDENTS

STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN 2017

Being a student leader in 2017 is filled with many responsibilities and duties to the school, students and to the past leaders who have made the school the way it is today. My role as a leader isn't only to be a good role model for the younger students but to plan activities and events that students can look forward to after countless hours of studying.



A new event that has become really popular amongst the students at Killester is Harmony Day. Harmony Day is a day when students celebrate different cultures by wearing the traditional clothing of their country to school. This day involves jam sessions, photos and traditional foods which is all organised by the student leaders. With Harmony Day we hope that students show pride, confidence and respect for the cultural diversity in our school.



Brigidine Day is one of the most highly anticipated day of the year for us Killester girls. Every year, the leaders work together to come up with a theme for students and teachers to dress up to and activities that make the day unforgettable. It is a one day break from our studies that consists of food stalls, photo booths, mini activities, such as kite flying, and a DJ that allows us to hit the dance floor with our teachers. Overall, the aim of the day is to have fun whilst raising money for our three chosen charities.



Specifically, as a Celebrations Leader, I strive to fulfil the Brigidine Core Value of *"celebrating all that is good with joy and gratitude"*. Along with the other leaders in the committee, we plan activities to celebrate everything and anything to make school even more enjoyable for the girls. Some events we celebrate include: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Friendship Day and even Christmas in July! My experience as a school leader has been extremely rewarding and truly unforgettable. The opportunity to work with other students from all year levels and teachers has allowed me to form long-lasting friendships and be the confident person I am today.

Rosemary Duong, Year 12 Celebrations Leader 2017

SCHOOL PRODUCTION

ANNIE REVIEW

The final performance of Killester's Annie on the night of Saturday the 13th of August, was one to remember. Fellow students, parents, teachers and guests had come to show their support for the cast. The production was spectacular! Congratulations to the students, who were the most convincing male characters anyone has seen! However, whether they played girls or boys, there was no need for the stage lights, with everybody's cheekbone highlight!

From the props, backdrops, stage lights and sound effects, to the live band, everything was perfect. Annie herself had such a magnificent character and her vocals shone the entire show. President Roosevelt and Miss Hannigan brought joy and life to the show. The orphans, maids and chorus filled the stage physically and spiritually. Their positive energy embraced the audience, and pulled us in further. Rooster and Lily took the audience to their own show with their acting, which was unforgettable. The connection between Annie and Mr Warbucks was obvious, provoking an army of emotions.



From the hard-knock life of the orphans to the hilarious solo by President Roosevelt, I felt an attraction to the cast that only developed as the show went on. Personally, my favourite scene was the finale at Mr Warbucks' celebrating Christmas.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all the cast, especially members in Years 11 and 12, who have contributed to their final production. It was certainly one to remember and, of course, without the help of the teachers' individual talents the show would not have been quite so spectacular!

Vivian Thai

IN REFLECTION

Two years ago, my then nine year old daughter, went on the MOST amazing night of her life - A Taylor Swift concert. She went with one adult and six friends. The joy I saw on her face when she got home, the consistent unrelenting five day rant about how amazing the concert was, truly made me so happy, knowing she had an experience any little girl or teenager would dare to dream of.

Fast forward two years, and there were many young, excited, ecstatic girls, going to an Ariana Grande concert the other night. Many, were able to go home to 'beam' to their parents, family or friends about their unbelievable experience. Respectfully and extremely sorrowfully, many young girls haven't had the chance to 'blab' or 'gloat' about their night. They are injured or no longer with us.

A young Year 7 Killester girl mentioned to me yesterday, that she is considering NOT going to Ariana Grande's concert in September now, as she is so very worried she will not be safe.

That breaks my heart. Quietly, the terrorists are creeping their way into our innocent, young, hopeful community. And it's just not fair!!!!

In this year of 'Encourage the Courage', we need to remind our young, enthusiastic community, that we ALL have a place to exist. That we all have a right to express our feelings, our love of and for our interests. The right to be independent and free to explore life, in the measure that best suits 'US' - whether it be exploring music, dance, drama, literature, science, maths, religion, each other.

May we take this time to reassure our young ladies and each other that together we are strong. Not only in ourselves, but super strong as a Killester community.

Let us as teachers and mentors reassure our beautiful students, that they are safe and valued. But let us also reassure them that together we can try to continue (with the rest of the world) to educate each and every one of our girls and our community, that there is very LITTLE tolerance for severe violence, exclusion and impatience in any aspect of our existence.

Penny Curtis (Killester Staff Member)

UPCOMING EVENTS



KILLESTER COLLEGE
ART & TECHNOLOGY
EXHIBITION
KENNEDY HALL | OCTOBER 20TH 7PM

Past and Prospective families always welcome

OPEN DAY

Sunday 6th August, 1.00 - 4.00 pm



The Killester Involvement Committee in conjunction with
The Multicultural Affairs Division of the Victorian Government
proudly presents

Killester College Multicultural Dinner

Saturday 16th September 2017 at 7.00pm

Dinner will be a smorgasbord of main courses and
desserts from at least ten different cultures

Entertainment by the Killester Students

Dress: Neat casual or Cultural Dress

B.Y.O. Alcohol, drinks and glasses

\$20 per person - Limited to 120 people
<https://www.trybooking.com/281284>



KEEP IN TOUCH

We value our past students and teachers, and invite you to join in the activities of the Alumni Network, and receive updated information on reunions and College and Alumni events. Please visit the Killester College website www.killester.vic.edu.au and you will find Alumni under the "Community Portal", or simply click on the link.

Please visit our site to record your details if you would like to join or if your details have changed.