



MACKILLOP NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 10 2015, 26 JUNE

PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Dear families, students and friends,

Vale Jodie Higgins

By now, most of you would have heard the news surrounding staff member Jodie Higgins. Late last week Jodie sustained a thrombosis on the lung and became unconscious. She was placed on life support and died in the company of her loving husband, children and family.



Jodie was a respected and admired teacher who brought to her colleagues and students professionalism, dedication, a deep concern for high achievement and for the wellbeing and progress of all in her care. She exhibited the best that the teaching profession can be over the last 13 years here at MacKillop. Our sense of loss and grief will not impede our desire and capacity to stand with her husband Michael and her young children, Curtis and Zoe. The College will support her family and friends in prayerfulness and practical ways in the hope that their grief might be a little lessened knowing that it is widely shared.

Over 500 current and past students, staff members, and families participated in the Rosary last Friday afternoon. The Canberra Times on Tuesday's page 3 published a fitting tribute to Jodie. The College will publish an In Memoriam in this Saturday's paper.

I would like to acknowledge the dignity, self-control, and respect that so many staff and students brought to this unhappy news, and also to acknowledge the strength of the wider MacKillop community in supporting the school and Jodie's family.

Year 7 Camp

Thank you to Mr McNicol and the Year 7 Coordinators, particularly Mrs Colleen Kain, and PC teachers who have accompanied our splendid Year 7s to the Year 7 Camp at Collaroy in Sydney. They have enjoyed, I am sure, many opportunities (constructed and otherwise), to build on their already strong sense of community, to meet more new people, and experience splendid Sydney weather (nearly as good as Melbourne's) while away on camp. What a great way to bring the term to a close!

Farewell Fr Peter Day

Members of the Corpus Christi Parish would already know that Fr Peter Day will be moving to Queanbeyan to look after rural parishes by the end of next term. Fr Peter has been a strong supporter of the College, a welcome visitor among the staff and students, and has provided challenging and appreciated perspectives to Church teaching and social justice to this community. He will be sadly missed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Fr Peter for his friendship and guidance to MacKillop. Fr Luke will continue as College Chaplain, and the College looks forward to welcoming Fr Warrick Tonkin as Parish Priest, who has spent the last several years as Parish Priest of St Monica's, Evatt.

Yours in St Mary MacKillop,

MICHAEL LEE
PRINCIPAL

PRINCIPAL'S PRAYER

Lord, we give thanks for the comfort of the resurrection of Your son, Jesus Christ, in this time of grief and sadness for members of our community. We look to the Cross with hope. Amen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN MONDAY 29	• Year 11 2016 Parent Information Session
JUL FRIDAY 03	• Last day of Term 2
JUL MONDAY 20	• Term 3 begins
AUG WEDNESDAY 05	• Year 12 Retreat begins • Semester 1 Awards (W)
AUG THURSDAY 13	• Moderation Day • Year 12 AST Trial

COLLEGE NEWS

School Fees

Thank you to the families who have paid Term 2 fees. Any outstanding fees should be paid immediately unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved arrangement.

Term 3 fees will be sent out during the holidays. Term 3 fees are due to be paid by 7 August 2015. If you require more information regarding Direct Debit arrangements or other approved payment methods please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan, Fees Manager

Senior Scholarships

Year 10 students who have re-enrolled at St Mary MacKillop College are invited to apply for a scholarship to assist with Tuition Fees in Years 11 and 12. Successful recipients will have 50% of their Tuition Fee as set by the Catholic Education Committee (CEC) credited to their fees account for 2016 and 2017.

There will be two different categories of Scholarship:

Academic: Awarded to a student or students whose achievement has been outstanding throughout Years 9 and 10.

Community: Awarded to a student or students who have applied themselves consistently to their studies and who have contributed in significant ways to the community.

An application form must be completed and submitted to Mr Lee on or before Friday 21 August 2015. Forms will be available through Course Counselling or from the Front Office.

Kellie Quirk, Assistant to the Principal

Year 11 2016 Parent Info Session

A reminder for parents of current Year 10 students that the College is holding a Course Selection Information Session for Year 11 2016. This event takes place on Monday 29 June from 6pm in F Block at the Isabella Campus.



ACTION Route 858

From Monday 29 June, the ACTION Service 858 will no longer service Clive Steele Ave, Ashley Dr, and Isabella Dr. These changes can be viewed on the ACTION Website. For information, please call ACTION on 13 17 10.

Future Stars

Talisa Williams (Year 7) and her dance crew, DKC will travel to San Diego in August to compete against the world's best hip hop dancers in the junior division of the Hip Hop International.

Nicole Fisher, Jasmin Lachlan (both Year 9), Taylah Parr, Katherine Thomas and Samantha Thomas (all Year 10) will represent the ACT at the National Calisthenics Competition on the Gold Coast in July.

Natasha Brittain (Year 10) will perform in a rendition of 'The BFG' during the July holidays. Natasha is currently the MacKillop representative on the Canberra Youth Theatres Ambassadors program. Early this month, she was part of the Child Players ACT performance at Fast and Fresh, which took out the "Best Script 2015" for their play, "take 3".

Adam Long (Year 7), Ethan Long, and Malcolm Long (both Year 9) have been selected to represent the ACT at the School Sport Australia Hockey Championships in Perth this August.

COMMUNITY + HOLIDAY NEWS

The BFG

This production will be performed at theatre@bcs, Belconnen Community Centre, Swanston Court, Belconnen in the July holidays. Performances @10.30am and 2.00pm on 9, 10, 11 and 15, 16, 17 and 18 July. For bookings call 6257 1950 (Monday-Friday 10am-4pm) or visit www.canberrarep.org.au. Tickets also at door one hour before (cash sales only).

Parentline ACT - 6287 3833

Being a parent is the hardest job we'll ever have. All parents at some time experience difficulties and stress. Parentline ACT is a confidential, anonymous telephone counselling and information service. Call 6287 3833 to talk about parenting issues, gain ideas, seek support, understand your child/teenager, build better relationships, and to find what is available for parents, teenagers and children.

Make-A-Wish Fundraising Dinner

The Canberra Branch of Make-A-Wish® Australia is holding a Winter Wonderland Gala Dinner, taking place on Saturday 18th July. All the funds from the evening go towards granting wishes for children with life-threatening medical conditions. Tickets can be purchased online at <https://www.stickytickets.com.au/25655>. The night will include a 3 course meal, live entertainment, auctions and prizes.

Canberra School of Tennis

Take part in the July Holiday Camps. Learn from experienced coaches and have lots of fun! To book, call 0432 118 204, visit csot.com.au, or email robert@csot.com.au.

Canberra Academy of Chess

A Chess Tournament will take place during the holidays on Friday 10 July at Melba Copland Secondary College for children under the age of 18. For information about the tournament and for entry details, visit <https://canberraacademyofchess.com.au/>

Bfirm Holiday Battlegames

Bfirm is running a school holiday 'Battlegames' program where participants take on up to 21 diverse and exciting challenges. Visit www.bfirm.com.au/battlegames.

Prayer Sessions

Fr Gilbert Carlo SVD will be in Canberra for 3 weeks in July. He will lead a one hour Meditation prayer at 7.30pm on Monday 6 July at Holy Family, Gowrie, and at 7.30pm on Mondays 13 and 20 July at St Thomas the Apostle, Kambah. Come and experience how deep breathing and stretches, chanting and silent meditation can deepen your faith and prayer life, and improve your health!

WANNIASSA NEWS

Year 7 Camp

This week the Year 7 students went on a camp to the Collaroy Centre in Sydney. There, we did a variety of different activities including rock climbing, abseiling, drop pole, laser tag and lots of others. These activities were focussed on team-building and participation while having fun at the same time. We were put in our cabin and activity groups with a few friends, but mostly different people. This was a great opportunity for us all to make new friends, while bonding even more with our old friends. Everyone loved all the different activities and we were all sad when we had to leave. There wasn't a single negative vibe over the three days and we all loved everything about it. I am sure that Year 7 students have all made new friends and if we could go again, we all would.

Darcy Kinsella (7F3)

Year 8 Coastlife

On Wednesday and Thursday this week Year 8 students participated in the 2015 Coastlife Program. The Coastlife Program is aimed towards encouraging students to work in a team and have their voices heard. It consists of a variety of engaging games and activities that are fun and give students the opportunity to work with new faces and new personalities. The activities involved strategy, skill, communication, problem solving and leadership; these games would not have been as effective without a team effort. The objective that was intended from the Coastlife Program facilitators was achieved to an exceptional standard, as we formed stronger relationships with those whom we have never come into contact with before. It also gave us the experience of team building and discovering how other students think and cooperate in the atmosphere of a group. Overall it was a positive day and the students were able to take away a great deal of life lessons that will assist in our futures.

Louise Tomelty (8E1) and Sarah Boyd (8E1)



Year 9 Careers Session

On Tuesday this week Mrs Hundy, the Careers and VET Coordinator from the Isabella Campus, and a group of 5 ex-MacKillop students and one current senior MacKillop student, came to the Wanniasa Campus for the morning. They told us about their jobs and how they discovered which career they wanted to pursue. We learnt about how to complete part of an apprenticeship while still studying for our Year 12 certificates by applying for an ASBA. We also learned about the different things you will need to know when attending a job interview. The ex-MacKillop students talked about the steps they took to achieve their goals and the steps we can take to help find and achieve ours. They told us about their working conditions and the different opportunities that MacKillop had provided for them. It was an incredible learning experience for our grade and it has definitely helped us learn how to start preparing for our future.

Charly Lehmensich (9EW)



Year 9 Transition Day

On Wednesday this week, Year 9 students spent a day at the Isabella Campus on their Transition Day. We went through all the elective subjects we can choose when we transition to the Isabella Campus for Year 10. We also had a reflection and a liturgy to stop and look at what we have achieved on our journey through secondary school and what we are planning to achieve. This day gave us an insight into what the college has to offer by looking at the resources and discussing the courses available for us, like Food and Textiles, Technology, IT, Performing Arts, and Physical Education. We also looked at the library facilities that we will have access to. We got a feel for what the Isabella Campus is like and were introduced to some of the teachers we may have in the future. It relieved stress about shifting from one campus to the other and was an insightful and comforting day due to the warmth of the staff and students at the Isabella Campus who embraced us.

Annabelle Lester (9EW)

Year 9 yLead Day

On Thursday, Year 9 participated the yLead Program, which is about inspiring young students to become leaders. The yLead team led the Year 9 students in some games that apply to real life situations. The first game was about finding your way through a grid and memorising the path taken to get there. The purpose of the game was that in life you will need to take opportunities and you don't know where you'll end up. No matter what keep trying until you succeed. The next game was Jenga. We were told not to be 'losers' and make our opponents loose at all costs. This was a crazy environment with people yelling and screaming at others to try and make them fail. Not many blocks were placed on top of the tower. Then we were told to work together and be calm. This ended up in us placing more blocks on top of the tower. The main point was that changing the environment you are in helps with what you are trying to achieve. The overall message the yLead team was trying to make is, that you need to take action to be a leader. Overall it was a really fun and enjoyable day.

Anwar Hamill (9F2)

Seasons for Growth - Parent Program

Seasons for Growth is a small group loss and grief program which aims to strengthen the social and emotional well-being of young people who are dealing with significant loss or change.

The Seasons for Growth Parent Program has been developed to meet the needs of parents supporting children and young people through family change and loss. The program provides an opportunity for parents to better understand the experience of death, separation and divorce from a young person's perspective, and to explore ideas and strategies that they may wish to consider as they support their boys and girls transition through family change. It is a small group program for 6-12 parents. It is normally held over 2 x 2 hour sessions and is for parents only.

The College is planning to hold a Seasons for Growth Parent Program on Thursday August 27 and September 3 from 5:30pm - 7:30 pm. It is important that parents commit to attending both sessions.

If you are interested in taking part in the program or would like more information please contact Michelle Predovan on 6209 5147 or email michelle.predovan@mackillop.act.edu.au.

*Lachlan McNicol
AP Pastoral Care, Wanniasa*

Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS



Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Michael Grose

The language of resilient families

Children and adults in resilient families tune into the needs of each other, choosing situation-specific language, rather than simply regurgitating generalised 'feel-good' or 'get-on-with-it' platitudes.

Resilient families develop their own words and phrases to help each other get through the inevitable tough times that each person experiences.

The language of resilience generally refers to coping strategies such as empathy, humour and acceptance.

Following are 10 examples of the language of resilience, the coping skills each reflects and the types of situations where they are applicable.

1 Come on, laugh it off

STRATEGY: humour

GOOD FOR: kids who experience disappointment, failure and even loss.

Humour is a great coping strategy and a powerful tool for resilience as it heightens feelings of control. Some children and young people will naturally crack jokes or make fun of seemingly serious situations. This is a fantastic way to release stress and handle feelings of helplessness. As a parent you may need to lighten up tense situations by introducing humour of your own, which is something that many dads do really well.

2 Don't let this spoil everything

STRATEGY: containing thinking

GOOD FOR: kids who feel overwhelmed; kids who experience rejection; perfectionists

The ability to compartmentalise bad events and keep them from affecting all areas of life is a powerful coping skill. Sportspeople, politicians and others who work in the public arena need to be adept at it. When something unpleasant happens during recess, for example, kids need to park their thinking about that event so they can get on with the rest of the day. The ability to compartmentalise thinking is a fantastic life skill kids can learn within their family.

3 Let's take a break

STRATEGY: distraction

GOOD FOR: kids experiencing stressful situations; kids who think too much; kids with busy lives.

When kids are troubled by events or spend too much time brooding it helps to do something to get their minds off things for a time. Playing games, spending time together, watching some TV, going out – are all good distracters for worried, anxious or stressed kids. Self-distraction is healthy, providing some welcome perspective. It also prevents kids from replaying awful experiences in their heads, blowing them out of proportion.

4 Who have you spoken to about this?

STRATEGY: seeking help

GOOD FOR: kids who experience bullying and social problems; handling all types of personal worries.

Resilient people seek solace in the company of others when they experience difficulty. That's why social connection is such a strong preventative strategy for young people. The promotion of help-seeking behaviours is one of the best coping strategies of all. Even if kids don't overtly talk about what's bothering them, it can be immensely reassuring to spend time around others who are empathetic, understanding and willing to listen and help.

5 I know it looks bad now but you will get through this

STRATEGY: offering hope

GOOD FOR: kids experiencing loss, bullying, change or extreme disappointment.

There are times when parents can do nothing else but keep their children's chins up and encourage them when life doesn't go their way.

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... The language of resilient families ...

Being the 'hope' person can be hard work, that's why parents need to be supported by resilient people and workplaces too. It helps to be mindful that a child or young person's resilience is nurtured by the presence of at least one supportive adult. You may have to be that person!

6 What can you learn from this so it doesn't happen next time?

STRATEGY: positive reframing
GOOD FOR: kids who make mistakes, let others down or experience personal disappointment

One of the common attributes of optimistic people is their ability to find a learning, or look for a message, in difficult or negative situations. Parents can help kids reframe events to help them see things differently. For instance, rather than regarding a public speaking opportunity as problematic and a chance to look foolish it's better to reframe it as a challenge and a chance to shine. It also helps when parents model reframing so kids see you changing how you view seemingly negative or worrying situations.

7 Don't worry – relax and see what happens!

STRATEGY: acceptance
GOOD FOR: kids who worry about exams or performing poorly in any endeavour; pessimists.

If you've ever been driving to an important event only to be stuck in traffic then you would know that there are some situations you just can't control. The only way to cope is to accept what's happening because worrying and fretting won't get

you anywhere. Similarly, parents with a resilience mindset can help kids understand what's worth worrying about and what's not, and that some things won't change no matter how much kids fret or beat themselves up!

8 This isn't the end of the world

STRATEGY: maintaining perspective
GOOD FOR: kids who catastrophise or blow things out of proportion.

While most of us catastrophise at times, jumping to the worst possible conclusion, it is a habit that only exaggerates anxiety. When kids constantly think the worst case scenario, challenge their views. "Yes, you could end up not knowing anyone at camp but you won't be the only one. Besides you'll probably end up making new friends like you generally do."

9 You could be right. But have you thought about ...

STRATEGY: flexible thinking
GOOD FOR: kids who catastrophise; experience extreme feelings; who exaggerate.

Many children and young people talk in extremes – 'awesome', 'the best', 'the worst' and 'gross' roll off their tongues easily these days. Unfortunately, their extreme language leads to extreme emotional responses. Develop the habit of winding back their language by introducing shades of grey, rather than black and white. Replace "I'm furious" with "I'm annoyed". "It's an absolute disaster" with "It's a pain". "I can't stand it" with "I don't like it". Realistic language leads to realistic thinking, which helps kids handle many ordinary situations that they have blown out of proportion.

10 What can we do about this?

STRATEGY: taking action
GOOD FOR: kids who mope; who experience disappointment; who feel inadequate.

Kids can sometimes feel overwhelmed by events such as constant failure, constant rejection or always narrowly missing being picked for a team. They can be overwhelmed by feelings of inadequacy and helplessness. Action is often the best remedy. Help them take the first step forward. Set some goals. Make some plans. Identify the first step and hold their hand while they take it. Taking action is a quality shared by resilient communities, organisations and individuals.

Bring resilience into your every day language

Resilient parents focus on building children's and young people's strengths for the future, while helping them cope with the present difficulties and challenges they experience. The key to promoting resilience lies in the language that parents use. My challenge for parents is to make resilience an integral part of your family's proprietary language. You'll know you have succeeded if your children as adults remind you, when they hear any complaints or whinges from you in your dotage, to 'hang in there', 'this too will pass' and 'find the funny side'.

Granted they may be phrases you don't want to hear, but at least you know that you've drummed into your kids some important core messages that have stayed for life.

Michael Grose



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