



ST MARY MACKILLOP COLLEGE CANBERRA



18 October 2013



PRINCIPAL'S LETTER

Welcome back to Term 4

Welcome back to the entire College community from what was, I hope, a relaxing holiday for everybody.

Some good news:

Congratulations to Mrs Michelle da Roza, Assistant Principal Curriculum, who presented a highly successful workshop at the Australian Curriculum Studies Association Conference in Darwin. This conference was attended by hundreds of teachers, school leaders, and university representatives, many of whom commented favourably about the work Michelle is undertaking with the staff at MacKillop.

Congratulations are also due to Mrs Clare Fletcher and Mrs Maria O'Donnell who joined Michelle da Roza in presenting a workshop at the Australian College of Educational Leaders Conference here in Canberra over the holidays. The workshop was about collegial mentoring of teachers in light of the new professional standards for teachers that is being introduced. The workshop was of exceptional quality and drew considerable praise from those who attended.

Student Leaders

Following a student leadership workshop, written application, formal interview (which was undoubtedly terrifying), a speech to the Senior Assembly, and a vote open to Year 11 and all staff, I am delighted to announce the student leaders for 2014:

College Captains: Claudia Holland and Reece Inkpen
Faith & Community Captain: Emma Papantoniou
Sustainability Captain: Benjamin Castle
Performing Arts Captain: Jade Boyle
Sports Captain: Hayley Ngametua

These students have won their positions in an open ballot by their peers and teachers. I am sure they will build upon the many strengths of the 2013 team. MacKillop is blessed to have an extraordinary array of qualities among our students.

Yours in St Mary MacKillop,

MICHAEL LEE, PRINCIPAL



PRINCIPAL'S PRAYER

Lord, we give thanks for the example of your mother Mary. May she guide us closer to you. Amen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV
THURSDAY
14
• ISART Exhibition Opens

NOV
TUESDAY
19
• Year 12 Breakfast & Farewell Assembly

NOV
WEDNESDAY
20
• Senior Exams commence

NOV
FRIDAY
29
• Year 10 Picnic Day

COLLEGE NEWS

TOP STORIES

Host families required.

In February 2014, the College will be hosting a visit from St Joseph's School, Le Havre, France. There will be 20 students attending St Mary MacKillop College for approximately two weeks from 14 February 2014. On our next France Study Tour, we will be hosted by St Joseph's in France. If your family is interested in hosting a student in your home for this period of time, please contact me via email - andrew.mitchell@mackillop.act.edu.au. Studying French is not a requirement; any students or families interested in the experience of having an international student in their home is welcome to participate.

Andrew Mitchell



Law Scholarship.

The Snedden Hall & Gallop University Scholarship for Legal Studies provides financial assistance to students aspiring to study law in Canberra. Each year the Canberra law firm offers two scholarships to successful Year 12 graduates who will receive \$6000 over their first three years of legal studies.

This year, Daniel Low from St Mary MacKillop College was selected as one of the two successful students in demonstrating the excellence and abilities to win the scholarship for 2013.

The candidates were required to undertake a gruelling set of oral presentations and interviews to be selected. The College wishes to congratulate Daniel on his outstanding efforts and achievements in making the final fourteen students and delivering a thoughtful and considered presentation on the Senate. The College could not be more proud of his contributions, dedication to this opportunity and success in the scholarship selection process. Well done to Daniel on a wonderful experience and fantastic recognition of the dedication shown to study law in the future.

Michael Batten, SOSE Coordinator



Knitting Circle Project.

Thank you to all who participated in the knitting for the blanket presented at the Mackillop Day Mass. Many students on the Wanniasa Campus knitted rows for the squares and completed pieces were sent in from our Community. The squares were constructed together and made into a baby blanket. This is an image of the completed blanket with students on the Wanniasa Campus who participated and knitted with love.

Roberta Coulston

Future Stars!

Hannah Smit (Year 7), Adam Gauntlett (Year 9) and Lachlan Watt (Year 10) represented the ACT at the Australian Junior Squash Championships over the school holidays.

Rebecca Cross (Year 8) participated in the Swimming Australia State Teams Age Short Course Championships late last Term.

HOUSEKEEPING

Students leaving at the end of 2013.

The College is receiving a number of requests from families wishing to enrol for 2014. If students in Years 7 to 11 are leaving at the end of 2013, early advice in writing would be appreciated so that planning for new students can be undertaken.

Vivienne Joice, Enrolment Secretary

School Fees.

Term 4 Fees have now been sent out. Fees are to be paid by 1 November 2013 unless paying by Direct Debit or other approved method. If you would like information regarding Direct Debit payments or have any queries regarding your fees, please contact the Fees Office.

Michelle Predovan, Fees Manager

CAMPUS NEWS

WANNIASSA NEWS

2014 SRC Election Process

A focus of the Pastoral Program in Term 4 will be on leadership. Different aspects of leadership will be explored in preparation for the election process for Years 8, 9 and 10 Student Representatives. Over the coming weeks students will be called to nominate for various positions and complete an application. The positions and dates of elections for 2014 positions are:

For current Year 8s:

- Female Campus Captain & Male Campus Captain. Election to be held on Wednesday 6 November.
- Wanniassa House Captains (Male and Female from each House). Election to be held on Wednesday 20 November.

For current Year 7 and Year 9 students:

- Year 8 SRC (one student from each House). Election to be held on Wednesday 20 November.
- Year 10 SRC (one student from each House). Election to be held on Wednesday 20 November.

From 2014 two House Captain Positions will be open to Year 9 students in each House (one female student and one male student). This will allow for additional leadership opportunities for Year 9 students on the Wanniassa Campus.

Parentingideas

Many teenagers today engage in some capacity with various forms of computer games. The article attached to this newsletter "Danger- Screenager ahead" addresses the issue of computer game addiction. It is a problem that is increasing and the article provides important information for parents about the consequences.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

With stage 1 of the Northside landscaping now complete, students again have easier and quicker access to the basketball courts via the new stairs.

All parents, or others, who drop-off or pick-up students before and after school are asked to do so on the Basketball Courts. This is in the interests of maximising the safety of all students and road users at these busy times of the day. Students crossing roads and cars parked on surrounding streets increases the risk of accidents that I am sure that we all wish to avoid.

Drumbeat

Over the course of Term 3, ten students from across Year 7, 8 and 9 have participated in the 'Drumbeat' Program. 'Drumbeat' is a 10 week therapeutic course which utilises the Djembe drum using rhythm and music to allow students to express themselves. The program aims to increase self-confidence and social awareness, build healthy relationships and encourage personal reflection whilst also reducing isolation within all areas of life.

Facilitated by Mr Jeremy Margosis, the group have met for one hour a week for the duration of the ten-week program. Sessions covered topics such as values, peer pressure, identity, social harmony and teamwork. The program concluded this week when the students involved performed at the Campus Assembly.

The program will again be conducted in Term 4 for identified students.

Status Awards

Congratulations to the following students who have been presented Status Awards at the Wanniassa Campus: Zanya Bendebel 7A1, Maddie Black 7W1, Alexis Cross 7W2, Ben Stokes 7E2, Rhye Zasiadczyk 7E1

Lachlan McNicol, AP Pastoral Care

COMMUNITY NEWS

Resourcesful Adolescent Program

The Resourceful Adolescent Program for Parents helps parents as their sons and daughters journey through adolescence. The course starts on Thursday 31 Oct between 6-9pm with three sessions over three weeks. The course takes place at 57 Hicks Street, Red Hill. A \$50 fee includes course materials. Concessions available. To book, call Gayle at CatholicCare on 6162 6122.

Host family needed

Student Exchange Australia New Zealand is looking for a volunteer host family for a 17-year-old Italian boy who arrived in Australia in July 2013 and is currently attending Canberra College. He is a very open minded and friendly boy interested in sports and meeting friends. Together with his host family he would love to experience new activities and simply be part of his host family's daily life. If you can help, call Isabelle at the Student Exchange Office 1300 135331.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

This weekend retreat for couples takes place over 8-10 November at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, NSW. Information can be found at www.wwme.org.au or on 02 4283 3435.

Padua Class of '83 Reunion

This takes place at Hotel Realm Barton, Saturday 9 November 2013, from 5.30pm. The organising committee are trying to locate ex-students who would have completed Year 10 at Padua Catholic High School in 1983. This includes students who may have left a little earlier, as well as teachers who would have had the pleasure of educating us!

Please contact Kerrin Hardie (Prout) on 0404 462 292, kezzah68@gmail.com, or at 'Padua High Wanniassa Class of '83' on facebook.

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose – No. 1 parenting educator



Danger: 'screenager' ahead...

Computer game addiction is on the rise among Australian children and teenagers, replete with a host of alarming consequences, writes Karen Fontaine

As with most sedentary activities, at first blush it seems harmless enough. Playing computer games is, after all, much less dangerous – physically, at least – than rugby union, rock-climbing or rollerblading, right?

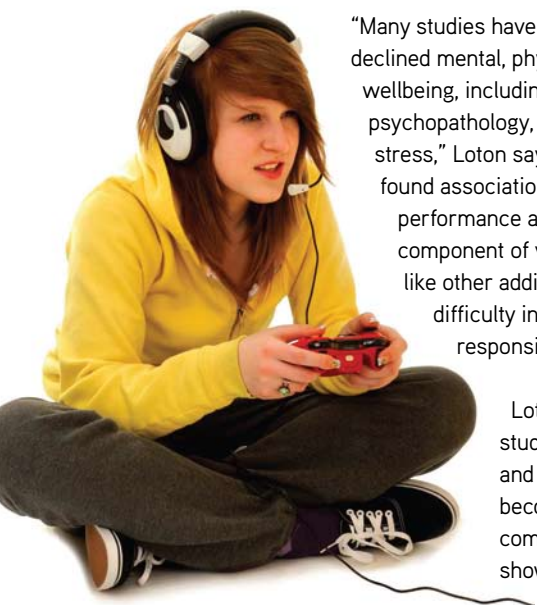
However, experts are seeing a rise in the incidence of what they term obsessive or addictive behaviour; that is, pervasive, long-term and heavy use of computer games.

A 2010 study by Sydney University's Professor Vladan Starcevic and the department of Psychological Medicine at Sydney's Nepean hospital revealed that up to ten per cent of gamers who took part showed signs of addicted behaviour. His findings were published in *The Australian* and *New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*.

The findings mirror a recent two-year Singapore study, which found that one in ten schoolchildren were computer game addicts.

Victoria University researcher Daniel Loton, who is writing his PhD on the topic of computer game addiction, says although video gaming as a hobby is most prevalent in 25 to 30 year-olds, "it is still extremely popular among teens and children".

Potent, too, are the knock-on effects of addiction, including a propensity to cyber-bully, reduced social skills and an inability to interact in a 'live' situation. Teenagers addicted to computer games can also become withdrawn, depressed, agitated, have difficulty concentrating and poor attention spans.



"Many studies have found connections with declined mental, physical and social wellbeing, including increased psychopathology, depression, anxiety and stress," Loton says. "Other studies have found associations with poorer school performance and it is expected a component of video game addiction, like other addictive conditions, is the difficulty in meeting expected responsibilities."

Loton points out that studies suggest children and teens at risk of becoming addicted to computer games already show higher impulsivity,

aggression, lower family closeness and social competence before they become addicted, and they demonstrate declined mental health and school performance as a direct consequence of their addiction.

In the UK, the situation is so critical that computer game addiction has given rise to the establishment of a special 'technology addiction unit' at a private hospital. And although Sydney's Rivendell Adolescent Unit at Concord has treated computer-game-addicted teens, the Australian Medical Association, as yet, has no policy in place to address the problem. One of Australia's foremost experts on computer game addiction, child and adolescent psychiatrist Dr Philip Tam, wrote in a blog: "Since clients with more severe PIU (problematic internet use) are at risk of dropping out of school, affecting their physical health, or losing their job, it would be unethical not to address their problems in a professional manner. In my personal experience, the key to successful treatment is getting the client to fully recognise that they have a problem – what we term 'gaining insight'."

How to recognise it

Daniel Loton signposts the warning signals of computer game addiction:

- ▶ **Tolerance** – the need to play increasing amounts to get the same level of enjoyment
- ▶ **Withdrawal** – negative emotions if play is reduced or stopped
- ▶ **Salience** – video gaming dominating the person's thought;
- ▶ **Mood modification** – using video games to modify mood, either to relax or to become excited
- ▶ **Conflict** – conflict about gaming both within the person and with other people
- ▶ **Relapse** – repeated failures to cut back or stop gaming, despite the desire to.

What to do

Short of banning computer games, what can concerned parents do? In today's digital world, keeping kids away from computers is about as realistic as wrapping them in cotton wool. As such, Daniel Loton advises parents to:

- ▶ "Talk to your children about the role that video games have in their lives"
- ▶ "Try to develop a bit of an interest in the video games that your children play"
- ▶ "Share the activity with them, making it a family activity for at least some of the time"
- ▶ "Finally, if you believe there is a serious problem, seek help from your GP and/or a mental health professional."

Loton notes these recommendations are subjective and it depends on how the activity fits in with other aspects of life. "In all addictions, overall time spent on the activity is only a small component," he says. "Instead it is more important how that time is spent – that is, if a person chooses to play video games instead of going to work; as well as perceived dependence."

Karen Fontaine is a Sydney-based freelance journalist.