"Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away."

Mt 5:42

Reach out in generosity this week to someone with whom you do not normally associate. This could be done by offering companionship or offering material support. I remind parents and students that there are families of Mercy students in Queensland who are in need of our help.

Congratulations to the student leaders on their fundraising effort last Friday in support of the Queensland Flood Relief. Please be generous with your donations. We are called to be the compassionate heart and the giving hands of Christ.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians, Students, Staff and Friends

Thank you to those parents and guardians who attended the Information Nights over the last two weeks. I repeat my invitation to you to be fully involved in your child’s education. Ask your daughters and sons to explain aspects of their work to you. I extend my invitation to you to join one of the Advisory Groups mentioned in last week’s Newsletter.

MARK PREST AWARD

The Mark Prest Award is awarded annually to an outstanding educator at the College’s Night of Excellence. Last year the award was presented to Mrs Janet Barr. Janet is an outstanding educator and we are very pleased that she is a member of the teaching staff at the College teaching Mathematics and fulfilling the role of Year 12 Level Coordinator. The announcement was greeted with spontaneous applause by the 2010 Year 12 students who were present.

OPENING MASS

Please attend our Opening Mass on Wednesday 23 February at 7.30pm.

CONGRATULATIONS

Late last year Emma Hales (Year 12, 2011) entered a competition called the “Croydon Bazoo Acoustic Competition”. She won the competition from a field of 30 artists in her section, winning a beautiful custom made 225 Maton guitar and recording time at a recording studio. Emma writes and performs her own songs and has been part of our music programme under the instruction of Caroline Dickason. Well done Emma!

YEAR 7 CAMPS

Congratulations to all students and staff involved in last week’s Year 7 Camps.

COLLEGE SWIMMING CARNIVAL - TUESDAY 1 MARCH

Please keep the late afternoon and early evening free for the College Swimming Carnival to be held at the Croydon pool.

ADVANCE NOTICE – NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE

Advance notice is given to parents/guardians and students that the Night of Excellence this year will be held on Friday 16 December. This is a change from the traditional Monday night and advance notice is given to allow parents/guardian and students to plan work and holiday commitments in such a way that they will still be able to attend this special function.

SPECIAL PERSONS’ DAY

Each student is encouraged to invite a special person, grandparent/s, aunts and uncles or other person who is very significant in their lives, to join them on Special Persons’ Day on Tuesday 1 March.

Bernard Dobson
Principal
FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL - DIRECTOR OF STUDENTS

Thank you to those families who responded to the request to host a student from our Japanese sister school later this term. I now have sufficient host families. A brief meeting will be held for host families at 7pm on Thursday 3 March in the staff dining room.

I would ask that parents do not at any time use the bus bay areas for pick up or drop off. There is a clear safety issue here especially for pedestrian traffic. Staff on duty have responsibility to see that students board the busses in a safe manner. They cannot be watching out for students getting in and out of cars. The main driveway off Anderson St is the pick up and drop off area. In the early part of the year it can be quite congested but usually settles down as the term progresses. A reminder that upgrade work will soon commence on the Anderson St/Gardiner St intersection at the front of the school. This will involve some disruption to normal traffic flow.

Nominations for Student Council are taking place at Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. Please encourage your child to consider nominating. It is just another way of promoting a greater level of engagement by students in the school.

Well done to all involved in the Year 7 camp last week. Reports have been of a positive experience. Special thanks to the staff who attended and the Year 10 Peer Support Leaders who were also involved.

A further reminder that Tuesday 8 March is a student free day for all year levels due to the need for staff professional development related to the School Improvement Framework.

Michael Johnston
Deputy Principal - Director of Students

FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL - DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

The commencement of a school year is often a blend of excitement and chaos for students as uniforms are pressed, books are purchased and new routines are established. One of the most important aspects for Term one is for students to get organised and set routines for learning. Making sure folders or books are set up for each subject is the basic element for organisation. Establishing study routines both at school and at home is vital if learning is to be maximised. Creating a study space is the most ideal. Successful learning results in self-growth and self-motivation.

An ongoing generational debate is whether music is beneficial during study? Given that most students would say yes and most parents would say no, it’s worth exploring. I recently read an article by Michael Griffin, an educational presenter, who has researched this topic. His findings concluded that it depends on the task. “The more difficult the cognitive challenge, the more likely background music will disrupt the learning process. For less challenging learning tasks, music can assist in providing external stimulation and a positive learning arousal state”.

So where does this leave us with this debate? Well the first thing that needs to be clarified is the type of background music. Most students tend to listen to songs rather than music. Research has shown that lyrics are the most distracting element because they compete with the brain regions that process language. The tempo and volume are also significant factors. Very fast or loud music exerts greater cognitive load, which makes concentration more difficult. However, music which is very slow or too soft can also be distracting if straining to hear. Personality types also have an impact. “Extroverts require more external stimulation and often handle background noise better than introverts”.

Personally I find it difficult to concentrate with background music, but for those who like to study with background music, it is important to understand that for learning and studying purposes not all music is suitable. Selected music should not be about entertainment; choose music with moderate tempo and consistent volume. Instrumental music being the most suitable. Maybe this is an opportunity for mum or dad to set the study tone and dig out some old classics to play!!

Brian Hawthorne
Deputy Principal - Director of Studies

FROM THE REGISTRAR

SPECIAL PERSONS DAY
On Tuesday 1 March Special Persons’ Day will be celebrated at the College. The day commences with assembly and entertainment at 8.45am, followed by tours of the College and culminating with a shared morning tea. This is a day for students at each level to welcome those who are important in their lives to spend a few hours at the College. If you would like to attend, kindly email administration@mlmclilydale.catholic.edu.au with numbers attending for catering purposes.

Mary Ryan
Registrar

PARENTS AND FRIENDS AGM
The Parents and Friends Annual General Meeting will be held on:
Tuesday 22 February

Please arrive at 7pm in the Staff dining room at the rear of the Mount St Joseph building for a 7.30pm start.

Come and join us for a chat and a cuppa!!
EDUCATION TAX REFUND

The Australian Government is assisting you with the costs of educating your children. The Education Tax Refund (ETR) provides parents and guardians up to 50% back on a range of children's educational expenses. Refunds may be as much as $397 for each child at primary school, and up to $794 for every child at secondary school. Making the claim is simple. If you need to lodge a tax return, you can complete an ETR in your return or let your tax agent know you want to claim the refund. If you don’t need to lodge a tax return, you can complete an ETR for an individual 2010 claim, which you can get from the Tax Office Website or by calling 1300 720 092.

Who is eligible:

- A person who is entitled to receive Family Tax Benefit (FTB) Part A for a child undertaking primary or secondary school studies.
- Independent students in primary or secondary school.
- People on other allowances may be eligible too. So check your eligibility and the full list of what can be claimed on the Website.

I urge you to keep eligible item receipts and take advantage of the refund. Parents and guardians can claim for expenses such as school textbooks, study guides, stationery, computers, internet connections and educational software. You can also claim for prescribed trade tools for secondary trade courses.

For more information, go to www.australia.gov.au/educationalrefund.

Education Maintenance Allowance Information for 2011

Application Forms for the Education Maintenance Allowance are available from the Finance Department.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is provided to assist eligible families with the costs associated with the education of their children.

To be eligible for receipt of the EMA you must:

- be either a parent or guardian of a primary or secondary school student up to the age of sixteen; and
- be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrelink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004 or be a Veterans Affairs (TPI) pensioner or be a foster parent.

Consequently parents/guardians are able to access the EMA if they have a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card.

The eligibility criteria must be met as at the first day of Term 1 (1 February 2011) which is the first day for teaching staff) and Term 3 (18 July 2011).

The EMA application must be submitted to the school by 28 February 2011 for the first instalment and 5 August 2011 for the second instalment.

The EMA provides an annual amount of $460 for secondary students and is paid in two instalments. This amount is split evenly between the parents/guardians and the school.

Students turning 16 years in 2011 will be paid on a pro rata basis.

Eligible parents have the option to receive the 50% ‘parent portion’ of the EMA payment directly into the parent’s nominated bank account, or as a cheque payment. The application form includes a section for you to nominate whether you would like your EMA payment to be made to your own bank account or to receive your payment as a cheque. The banking details required will include the BSB code and the Account number.

Parents with continuing eligibility, who are paid the first instalment of 2011 through this school will not be required to complete a new application for the second instalment. Parents who transfer children to another school after 28 February 2011 and prior to or on 5 August 2011, must reapply at the new school for the second instalment.

Contact: If you have any questions please contact Mrs Margaret Kirkwood on 9237 1315.

Applications for the 1st instalment must be submitted to the school with a copy of your valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card by 28 February 2011.

NO LATE APPLICATION FORMS CAN BE ACCEPTED.
We are both extremely happy with the commencement of the school year and we have sensed a settled approach to the rigours of the senior school and the study programs it offers. We welcome Mr Callanan who joins us in the Barak campus as a Co-Director in charge of Curriculum and of course our newest members, our Year 10 students. This is a significant transition as it welcomes them into a new campus and a new working and learning environment. At their opening assembly the Year 10 students were welcomed and encouraged to take a mature and responsible approach to setting the foundation for their next three years of study.

The VCE / VCAL students have begun their lessons in full swing and have shown a positive approach to their studies thus far. It is imperative that all parents are aware that if any Year 10, 11 or 12 students miss an assessment task or SAC for a medical reason that a certificate is to be presented upon return to school. We expect contact with the Year Level Co-ordinator or Campus Director will be made to explain any absence and fill out the required forms so as to ensure students are able to meet their academic commitments.

Both the VCE and VCAL have strict guidelines for class attendance, work authenticity and submission of work by due dates. If a student does not comply with the requirements a VCE/VCAL panel will be convened to determine the outcome of results. Parents will be notified in these circumstances.

Being a senior school student poses many challenges both academically and socially. Choices are made for future studies and careers. Year 10 students will embark on work experience and set the foundation with their entry into VCE or VCAL. The Year 11 students undertake new study and work regimes and the Year 12 students embark on their final year of secondary schooling. Balancing school life with other commitments is vital. Setting up homework and study time in daily routines and organising information are significant aspects for success in all fields of study.

Our desire this year is to promote the achievement of excellence in our learning environment and to motivate our students to gain an appreciation for lifelong learning. We also encourage our students to be active members of the Barak campus and already we have witnessed such marvellous and proactive behaviour of helping others which is indicative of our students embracing our College theme;

PRESENCE, COMPASSION, UNITY and JOY.

The Barak Campus has set the following goals for 2011 and together we will be undertaking a number of initiatives to meet this commitment throughout the year.

- Promote the importance of learning both within and outside the classroom.
- Celebrate student learning through student success, past and present.
- Improve student ownership, relationships, responsibilities and spiritual growth within our community in the Mercy tradition.
- Provide equitable and challenging opportunities for personal growth, academic and vocational excellence.

The following are points presented to the Barak Campus students in their opening assemblies:

**Things You can Do!**

- Use your planner, Write things down.
- Have a Study Timetable at home (3+ hours each night).
- Work less hours at your part-time job. (Research shows that any student who works more than 10 hours a week in a part time job diminishes their overall academic result).
- To be successful, you must set goals. Have a big goal at the end and set smaller goals along the way.
- Study skills and organisational support sessions are available, use them.
- Understand your strengths and potential.
- Be actively involved in your learning, get feedback.
- Maintain respect and a positive learning environment in the classroom.
- Create your own knowledge, be independent in your learning.
- Value and respect contributions of your peers.
- Attend school on time, prepared to learn.
- Wear the college uniform correctly and with pride.

Success breeds success!

We have a wonderful team of Year Level Co-ordinators to support the staff and students as well as ourselves. Mrs Barr is the contact person for Year 12, Mr Palmer for Year 11 and Mr Brisbane for Year 10. Mr Schepis as Learning Co-ordinator will liaise with each year level.

As Campus Directors Mr Callanan is the person to contact if there are any specific curriculum, VCE / VCAL or learning issues and Ms Tabacchiera should there be any wellbeing issues or areas of student concern. Please feel free to contact us at the college if you have a query, we look forward to working with you and your children as the year unfolds.

Ms Lucia Tabacchiera & Mr Michael Callanan
Barak Campus Directors
Welcome to all our Year 12 students and families for 2011. It was lovely to meet many of you at the Information Night held on 16 February and I feel sure there will be a great working relationship between us all to ensure the Year 12 students have a successful year.

**School Assessed Coursework (SAC’s)**

Students have already begun preparing for SAC’s. This form of assessment is used by the VCAA in conjunction with the end of year exams to allocate marks for each subject which are then used to create a student’s ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank). Students need to ensure they are focused and perform at their best during these assessments. The only reason a student would not sit a SAC on the required date is extreme illness; a medical certificate must be supplied for an alternate date to be arranged. If a student just misses a SAC, they forgo their mark for that particular outcome and this would have major implications for their overall scores. If you have any concerns regarding this, please feel free to contact me.

**Special Provision**

Special Provision provides eligible students with the reasonable opportunity to participate in and complete their senior secondary studies. There are four forms of Special Provision for VCE: Student programs, school-based assessment, Special Examinations Arrangements and Derived Examination Score. The first two options are determined at the discretion of the school. Students must apply to be considered for Special Examination Arrangements. This requires the student and their family to complete an application form available from Mr Callanan – Campus Director (Learning). These application forms must be submitted by early March. The Derived Examination Score is used on exam days if a student is unable to sit their VCAA exam.

**Community Mass**

Our opening Community Mass will be held in the Doyle Centre on Wednesday 23 February at 7.30pm. It holds special significance for the Year 12s and it is expected that all will attend.

**Prefects**

There will be a Leadership Afternoon for all Prefects on Friday 4 March. The prefects have taken on their roles with great enthusiasm this year and would like to hear from any member of the school community who has ideas that would be relevant to their particular role in the school.

**Student Drivers**

One of the major highlights for many Year 12 students is turning 18 and gaining their driver’s licence. Please do not organise to have any driving lessons or book a licence test during school time. There are many opportunities to organise these at other times. Students who have their licence and drive to school need to see me regarding parking. Students are not to leave the property during the day, nor can they access their car during the day. Due to our building program, arrangements have changed this year and there is no parking on the property for student drivers.

**Key Dates - Term 1 2011**

- **Wednesday 23 February:** Community Mass (Doyle Centre 7.30pm)
- **Tuesday 1 March:** Swimming Carnival
- **Tuesday 15 March - Friday 18 March:** Retreats
- **Friday 25 March:** Athletics Carnival (Quarry Road Complex)
- **Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 April:** Student Progress Interviews
- **Thursday 7 April:** RE Seminar Day 1
- **Term 1 concludes at 3.15pm**

**Well Done**

It is always interesting seeing the great variety of activities our students become involved in and how talented they are. Special congratulations to Damian Roach 12 Red for his selection into the Victorian Eagles Under 18 State Grid Iron Team. This team will be competing at the Australian Championships during the Easter break in Sydney. Good Luck to Damian.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns on 9237 1361 or e-mail barrj@mlmclilydale.catholic.edu.au

*Mrs Janet Barr*

*Year 12 Co-ordinator*

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**LIBRARY NEWS!**

**MLMC Libraries Delivering Services through People and Place.**

Welcome back to a new school year from the Library Team at McAuley and Barak Libraries. We welcome two new members to the team, Andrea Coney (Dip T., B Ed., M. Ed.,) Head of Library and Information Services and Katie Stanley (B.Sc, Dip.Ed, Grad. Cert. Rel.&Val.Ed., M.Ed.), Teacher Librarian, McAuley Library.

The team is looking forward to a productive year working with your child in the learning centres and in partnership with their teachers. Learning today means learning to learn for a lifetime and our school libraries are involved in teaching students to practice the skills they need to seek, evaluate and use information throughout their lives. In fact, research shows those students from schools with professionally staffed, fully equipped libraries score higher on literacy and achievement tests. In this aspect, we are indeed fortunate to be able to offer our expertise assisting in a range of ways including:
Welcome back to sport! Term 1 is a busy term for sport. The College Swimming Carnival is on Tuesday 1 March, followed by the Athletics Carnival on 25 March. Our Eastern Independent Schools Melbourne (EISM) competitions are underway for Senior and Year 9 Sport. Week 1 proved very close in the seniors and mixed results in the Year 9 level of competition with the results shown right.

Congratulations to the following students who have achieved significant achievements in their chosen fields over the holiday period.

Ella Bilton- Gough – Ella recently arrived home from the Duel in the Desert Junior World Cheerleading Championships. Ella placed 6th in the level 2 teen aggregate. Her team received 1st place for the best choreography and dance performance section for the full duration of the championships. Well Done Ella!

Matt McKane, Jacob Crowe, Cheyne Vankoll and Josh Bromily, who were selected in the U/16 RDCA Representative Cricket team. These boys played cricket matches all over Melbourne from the 3-12th January. Well done to all on your achievement.

This year the Year 12 Theatre Studies students are performing a modern play about the ancient Greek myths. The play is called *Metamorphoses* by Mary Zimmerman and it retells Ovid’s tales in such a way that it brings them to life, with wit and beauty.

The Theatre Studies students are eagerly preparing lighting, costumes and special effects for this very entertaining show and now it is everyone else’s turn to audition.

Auditions begin this week and will run until Wednesday 23 February every night after school.

Students are to collect Audition forms and Permission letters from Student Reception. The Permission letter will give details and dates for the play. Please get your child to put their name down in Reception, or ask Student Reception for help.

The play is open to all students from Years 7 through to 12 so please, if your child is interested, encourage them to have a go. If you have any queries please don’t hesitate to contact me on 9237 1369.

Elizabeth van Oosterom - Performing Arts Faculty Head

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Back to School Asthma Checklist

Back to school time presents a phenomenon called the ‘Back to School Spike’, which is a well-documented occurrence of an increase in asthma hospital admissions in children. This trend occurs two weeks after school goes back, with the spike generally occurring in mid to late February. Ensure your child with asthma is prepared for the new school year by following this simple back to school asthma checklist.

☐ Doctor Review
☐ Updated Asthma Action Plan *(advise the school of any changes to their plan)*
☐ Medication Review
☐ Preventer medication scripts
☐ Technique Review *(good device technique will ensure more medication reaches the small airways)*
☐ H1N1 Vaccination

*(A person with asthma who gets any type of flu has a greater chance for developing serious health complications from the infection. Anyone with asthma is recommended to get both the seasonal flu vaccine and 2009 H1N1 vaccine.)*

☐ School Asthma Action Plan returned

(This needs to be updated at least annually or as required)

☐ Blue Reliever Medication & Spacer

(ensure your child has their blue reliever medication and spacer device available at all times. Remember to check the expiry date and amount of medication left in the canister)

☐ Your child is aware of their asthma triggers

For further information please contact the Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 645 130 or email schools@asthma.org.au

Floods and Asthma

In the aftermath of the recent floods, most people will be focusing all their energies on the clean-up. However, it is important to protect your health in the process.

Mould and your Health
• Mould thrives in the damp, still environment of a flooded building
• People are exposed mainly by breathing in the mould spores
• Inhaling mould spores can trigger asthma and worsen other respiratory and allergic conditions
• Many people are sensitive to mould and may experience a stuffy nose, irritated eyes, wheezing or skin irritation
• Asthma symptoms such as coughing and wheezing often worsen after exposure to damp and mould
• Rarely, people with chronic lung disease may develop mould infections in their lungs

Stay in control of your asthma
There are several things you can do to ensure you stay in control of your asthma during this time:
• If you suspect your medications and/or spacer were affected by floodwaters, replace them as soon as possible
• Always carry your blue reliever and keep taking your preventer medication as normal
• Visit your doctor to receive a thorough check-up and update your Asthma Action Plan
• Be familiar with the signs of worsening asthma and the 4 step first aid procedure

For further information please contact the Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 645 130 or email schools@asthma.org.au