Gifted and Talented Students

How heartening to experience recently some of our most gifted young dramatists from Guilford Young College willing to work with teacher, Patricia Kempa, to voluntarily write, direct and stage the play *Revolution*. The play depicts in striking, convincing theatre the life and influence of Frederic Ozanam, who founded the St Vincent de Paul Society in 1833. This was a stunning example of gifted young people prepared to go the extra mile to produce a high quality artistic work that will endure and become a key resource for the St Vincent de Paul Society into the future.

Gifted and Talented Education is part of both the lexicon and the practice of contemporary education. Our recently completed Gifted Education Curriculum Document is available on the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office website. Certainly this is an area that deserves careful consideration so that our brightest students are suitably challenged and appreciated, and their learning programs are suited to their needs. However, in our Catholic schools context, there is more. St Paul urged his young disciple Timothy to, “Fan into a flame” the gift he had been given, implying a certain responsibility on Timothy’s part to recognise that his gifts came from God, and to be energetic in developing them. Jesus said, “From those to whom much has been given, much is expected in return”. So much emphasis is placed on ‘Entitlement’ in today’s culture, and this can be interpreted in a narrow, self-serving way. Responsibility and generosity need to complement entitlement. Our very gifted students will need to be empowered not only through rich learning opportunities, but also with spiritual gifts to help them see clearly that they are “God’s work of art”. May our gifted students working in the Sciences, Religion and the Arts, Trades Skills, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Social Justice and Compassion have the opportunity to nurture those gifts and achieve personal happiness and fulfilment while serving society through innovation and creativity for the sake of the common good.
Welcome to Archbishop Julian

Students and staff at our 37 Catholic Schools and Colleges have warmly welcomed the new leader of the Church in Tasmania, Archbishop Julian Porteous.

Many of our students responded to an invitation to complete welcome greeting cards for him. The results have been mounted for display in the Catholic Diocesan Centre in New Town.

Sr Kym Harris OSB*, who features in some of our school newsletters, wrote recently: “The bishop is no more a Catholic than the most recently baptised infant – he just has a different role to play. And we have a role to play towards our bishop. Firstly, we are to pray for him …”

She offered this prayer:

Loving Father, we thank you for the mystery of your Church,
The presence of your Son, Jesus, in our world.
We pray for Archbishop Porteous that, under the guidance of your Spirit,
He may lead us into ways of your grace and love.
We ask this in Jesus’ name confident that you will hear us.

Now they know what it means to be cold.

In the final week of term four, students and teachers from Pularumpi School at Garden Point on Melville Island in the Tiwi Islands were hosted by Sacred Heart Catholic School in Geeveston.

The visit by six student representatives from Pularumpi was a culmination of three and a half years of communications projects between the two schools and follows the visit two years ago by students from Sacred Heart to Melville Island to experience cultural activities there.

A number of schools in the Northern Territory and Tasmania are engaged in similar online projects with their students, under the banner of Linking Latitudes.

Using a range of online communications tools, students from Years 4, 5 and 6 collaborate on a range of projects. The students have been sharing documents on a secure online network where they post their videos, images, podcasts and stories.

It’s been a wonderful opportunity for one of the northern-most schools in Australia to work with the most southerly Catholic school in Australia and has helped students learn about each other’s culture and lives.

The Pularumpi and Geeveston students visited Bonorong Park, fellow students at St John’s Catholic School, Richmond, the Tahune AirWalk, ArtMob gallery and more. They even saw the spectacle of the tall ships visit to Hobart.

They felt the cold, but the warm hospitality, generosity and kindness of the families, students, principal and teachers at Sacred Heart has made the visitors feel very welcome.

By Peter Lelong TCEO

Sr Kym’s reflections can be found at www.castingthenet.com.au
Archbishop Porteous photo courtesy of the Mercury
Students from Year 9 Computing at MacKillop Catholic College, Mornington, are visiting The Freemasons’ Home in Lindisfarne every fortnight until early December to teach residents how to use iPads. Some residents have used a computer and some already have iPads or similar devices. A few are competent users but the majority know there are many things they don’t know!

At the first meeting it was hard to tell who was more nervous – the students or the residents! It was wonderful to watch the students grow in confidence as they experienced the joys of teaching a receptive student! There were the usual challenges with technology – uncertain internet connection, apps that had to shut down for no apparent reason and the challenges of older fingers learning to swipe and tap small devices. The enthusiasm of the residents and the patience of the students were heart-warming.

Belinda now knows how to use her iPad to see her sister’s house in the UK! She can no longer visit the library but has been shown how to borrow books electronically.

Keith is a competent user of technology but he’d like to learn a few tricks to impress his grandchildren.

Jeff has had issues connecting to the internet so his experience has been an exercise in patience. He and his tutor have enjoyed getting to know each other. Jeff is excited but frustrated and hopes by next session the bugs will have been eliminated.

Barb summed up the feelings of the group when she said, “I didn’t know what I didn’t know; now I have some idea of how much fun I can have and how much I can learn ... in my own home. It’s wonderful.”

Students from St Cuthbert’s Catholic School are supporting the project as ‘tech angels’ one afternoon a fortnight to provide assistance and support to residents, following some ‘tutorials’ and shoulder to shoulder support by MacKillop students. There is much excitement around!

St Mary’s College, Hobart, sent a message of welcome to the youth seeking asylum who were released from the Pontville Detention Centre. They held a ‘Wear Yellow Day’.

St Mary’s College Junior students gathered as a group, adorned in yellow (the international colour for human rights), with each class displaying a sign reading ‘welcome’ in different languages.

As well as wearing yellow, the students collected dictionaries to give to the youth seeking asylum.

Class teacher Mrs Nicole Wakefield said that the idea for Wear Yellow Day came from the Year 6 students.

"After completing the Migration unit of the Australian Curriculum, the students felt compelled to do something ‘real’ to support migrants to Tasmania”, Mrs Wakefield said.

“The concept of ‘Wear Yellow Day’ was created as a vehicle to do something of value rather than just talk about the issue.”

The students have also filmed the event to be included in a video they are making on the topic of asylum seekers.

The bright photo is our cover image.
Michael Musialike is a young Zambian who is making the most of his education and opportunities. He was awarded a scholarship to study geology at the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and has been enrolled in the Masters of Science program since July 2012.

Michael is a Catholic who attended schools in Zambia which were founded by missionary orders from Europe. He says his faith has made him the person he is today. He has found out that Catholic Mission was responsible for supporting many of the Catholic orders in Africa and is very grateful for what has been achieved in areas of health and education. He has seen the fruit of the missionary endeavours in his country from schools to AIDS clinics and hospitals. The Church has been there for Michael in all aspects of his life and he has interacted with many nuns and priests.

His parents and grandparents received help from the missionary orders which meant they had a good education. His parents were teachers and had seven children. Michael has an older sister who is a nurse, two brothers who are teachers and one brother who works in an aid agency as well as a younger brother and sister finishing off their tertiary studies in Zambia.

Michael likes Hobart for its beautiful scenery, the good quality of education we receive and the peaceful atmosphere. He has connected well with Tasmanians whom he finds very polite and friendly.

Although he feels at home here, he sometimes feels homesick. He was very pleased to see some Franciscans recently at the Installation of Archbishop Porteous as it reminded him of the friars in his home land.

When he completes his Masters next year, Michael plans to return to Zambia and teach at university. We wish him all the best for the future.

www.catholicmission.org.au

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*Academic Ranking of World Universities 2013
**Australian Government Office of Learning and Teaching
cool dudes!

Andrew Chinn is a cool dude who sings about God. He gets kids to sing and move to his songs and have fun. In September he travelled around Tasmania spreading his music. It was great to see the response from Kinders who were totally rapt in the proceedings right through to the cool Grade Six boys who put ‘Elvis’ moves into ‘The Butterfly Song’!

Several Catholic Schools hosted Andrew’s workshops, including John Paul II Catholic School in Clarendon Vale where we caught some happy participants.

Wakakirri state winners

Wakakirri is a word from the Aboriginal Wangaaypuwan people meaning “to dance a story”. The name is used for an Australian national story-sharing festival for primary schools that has been running since 1992. It gives opportunities for students to create, rehearse and perform with an emphasis on telling a story through dance and movement.

At Holy Rosary Catholic School, Claremont, Grade Six students participate in the Wakakirri experience as part of the creative arts program.

This experience enables them to actively participate in a big stage production. All students were able to perform in front of a large audience, be involved in the various parts of a stage production including lighting, scripts, garage banding music, planning costumes as well as creating sets and props. The process also promoted skills and general capabilities in teamwork, co-operation, creative thinking and inquiry-based learning.

After months of rehearsals, costume creations and backdrop paintings as well as a round of nerves, the students presented ‘Together Always’, a story dance of seven minutes that brought tears to many, including the national judge.

Congratulations Holy Rosary!
The theme of Catholic Education Week this year was ‘A Time for Giving Thanks’.

The week was marked by Catholic school communities around the State from August 11-17.

There were award ceremonies to mark contributions of staff and friends of Catholic education, there were Masses, a television commercial, a dedicated website, fundraisers and lots of other events. Our usual wonderful learning activities kept on too! So much happened in our schools that we can show only a fraction of what happened that week …

- St Anthony’s Catholic School, Riverside, celebrated in a variety of ways. One event was a parish mission stall at St Francis Church, Riverside, to raise funds for the schools in East Timor. The Grades 1/2 children had a fabulous time cooking for the stall and received great support from the parishioners.

- Sacred Heart Catholic School, Geeveston, and St James Catholic College, Cygnet, came together to celebrate the Feast of St Mary MacKillop. Fitting with the theme – ‘A time to give thanks’ – they began the day with a special breakfast for their whole community. It was a perfect way to give thanks to the many people making the Breakfast Club possible.

- Guilford Young College in Hobart hosted a student-led leadership conference for secondary students, while all classes at St Aloysius Catholic College in both their Huntingfield and Kingston campuses were involved in Vinnies Justice Day – very consciousness-raising and educational occasions.

- In Wynyard, St Brigid’s Catholic School hosted a VIP visitor, Archbishop Adrian, in one of his last school visits as Archbishop of Hobart. He was so pleased with their liturgy and questions to him, that he sang them a song!

- We celebrated our alumni. Brendon Gale was a Tassie boy who grew up in a large Catholic family in Burnie and attended a Catholic school like his mother and father before him. Family, faith and sport have always been important parts of his life. He is now CEO of the thriving organisation that is the Richmond Football Club. Read his story and more good news at www.catholiceducationweek.net.au

let’s all give thanks!
This year, Sacred Heart College, New Town, celebrated its 125th anniversary. This anniversary saw the culmination of a number of events in our annual JJAMM Week celebrations which also centres around the feast day of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, August 8.

On Wednesday, August 7, the Primary side of the College revisited 1888 in every way imaginable.

If you had visited the Primary campus on that day, first impressions would be that you had travelled back in time. The whole Primary transformed into 1888 with many period costumes, including a number of visiting Sisters, Priests and some rather strict-looking teachers.

Our day started with line-up, prayers and a stern address by Headmaster Deayton. This was followed by the traditional line-up inspections and marching in silence back to class. Believe it or not you could hear a pin drop as students marched in perfect silence!

The rest of the day involved traditional classroom lessons, sitting in rows and obeying very stern and strict teachers. In the playground the children enjoyed a multitude of old fashioned calisthenics and traditional games run by Sports Mistress Long. This all culminated in the whole school performing the heel and toe polka. The students also enjoyed cupcakes made by the Year Nine students. Over 450 cupcakes were made and decorated so the students could celebrate Back to Sacred Heart Day.

Paul Crennan, teacher, Sacred Heart College
Tasmanian students will have access to top-class facilities and training in the aquaculture industry with the recent opening of the Aquaculture Trade Training Centre at St Patrick’s College.

The construction of the centre was supported by close to $1 million in federal funding under the ‘Trade Training Centres in Schools’ Program.

The Centre was blessed and opened by Archbishop Adrian Doyle who praised it both for what it would offer young people, as well as for the boost it would give Tasmania’s aquaculture industry.

“Tasmania’s aquaculture industry has long been identified as one of the State’s sleeping giants,” Archbishop Doyle said.

“It is extremely pleasing that this centre will play a major role in growing the aquaculture industry for the benefit of all Tasmanians.”

Principal of St Patrick’s College, Prospect, Simon Cobiac, agreed.

“Our students are ideally placed to learn the essential seafood skills at school to enable them to gain employment in the seafood industry, complete qualifications and have a very worthwhile career pathway into the future,” he said.

Mr Cobiac said the centre would also offer students extra opportunities in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths.

“The study of Aquaculture is in alignment with our mission as a Catholic school searching for ways to teach sustainable ways of living into the future, ways in harmony with our environment, ways that respect the eco-systems of Tasmania and provide for an environmentally clean and green future.”

**snap goes the record!**

On Friday, September 20, the students, staff and broader community of St Patrick’s College gathered at the school’s Nano Nagle Gym and broke the record for the World’s Biggest Cereal Breakfast.

With an amazing 1,423 people present, SPC smashed the existing record that stood at 1,354!!

Mr Chris Sheedy, representative of the Guinness Book of World Records, was present to validate the number of people in attendance. He congratulated the school and spoke in glowing terms about the detailed preparation and organisation of this event.

This record-breaking attempt was organised by Year 12 students Zachary, Lachlan, Brodie and Lachlan, with the leadership of Deputy Principal, Dr Julienne Colman. The highly publicised event took six months to plan and drew the support of the local Prospect IGA Supermarket and Betta Milk.

Well done, everyone!!!
Over the July break, two staff from Tasmanian Catholic Colleges visited Kenya and Tanzania as part of the Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) Immersion Program, Carrigg Karibu. Five Australian school leaders attended the program including Mr Simon Cobiac, Principal of St Patrick’s College, and Mark Waddington of St Virgil’s College.

The group visited a number of schools and ministries that support students and families affected by poverty. Schools visited included the Br Beausang School, Embul’bul, the Ruben Centre, the Mary Rice Centre and Edmund Rice Sinon College in Arusha, Tanzania. They also saw a range of projects making a significant difference to the lives of people living amidst almost incomprehensible poverty, including the Women for Women project, Food Water Shelter and the Edmund Rice Advocacy Network.

“The program,” said Simon Cobiac, “was remarkable in gently opening the doors of East Africa. We were greeted with such warmth and generosity and inspired by the compassion, resilience, humility, faith and hunger for justice we encountered. We saw firsthand the reality of poverty and through conversation with students and adults in their homes learned about the struggles of people and the strength of family and community networks – a major strength of African society. I was inspired by the work of the Australian Christian Brothers in Africa, their countless co-workers and partners and the many 20-30 year old African men who are joining the order with a passion for justice to build a better future for East Africa. Rather than being overwhelmed by the scale of the problems I have come away with great hope for the future because of the hope shared with me by the African people I was privileged to meet.

“I have also learned more deeply to meet God in the moment, the here and now, in each and every relationship encountered each day. Africa and the people of East Africa will be etched in my heart forever.”

“We ... learned about the struggles of people and the strength of family and community networks – a major strength of African society.

Mark Waddington, Ruben Centre gardening monitor Doreen and Brendan
Oscar Giudici is a young man with a very mature attitude and a most promising future. He’s currently in his second year of a degree in Agricultural Science at the University of Tasmania (UTAS).

He comes from a family very involved in the Catholic Church. Born in Launceston and now living at Howden, Oscar started school at Sacred Heart Catholic School in Launceston, attended St Aloysius Catholic School, Kingston, from Grade 1, spent Grades 7-10 at St Virgil’s College, Austins Ferry and completed his senior secondary education at Guilford Young College (GYC) in Hobart.

He has taken many opportunities provided through his education for service and leadership. He has been in St Vincent de Paul groups throughout his schooling, was School Captain at St Aloysius and College Captain at St Virgil’s and GYC and is currently a member of the Catholic Students’ Society at the university. He has been particularly influenced by the charism of the Christian Brothers to be concerned for the marginalised.

After Grade 12, Oscar decided he’d like a year away from study and was inspired by visiting Christian Brother Damian Price who told him, “The only journey that really matters is the journey of the heart.” His mother and grandmother had been born in Africa and later Oscar met Fr Eusebius from Tanzania who was studying at UTAS. This helped him decide to choose Africa and in 2011 he travelled to Fr Eusebius’ home town of Arusha, where he volunteered at the Edmund Rice School.

He fell in love with Africa and realised that though the world is not what it should be, the change needs to come from within. He is really motivated now to complete his Bachelor of Agricultural Science, so next time he visits Africa he will go with more skills to really make a difference.

“I will continue to build understanding in Australia about East Africa and support greater fund raising efforts to assist East Africa as I have now seen in person the incredible value of our friendship to African people and the funds we raise to help Africans build Africa.”

Over 2000 students attend the Ruben Centre school run by the Christian Brothers and receive an education that is consistent with the calling of Blessed Edmund Rice – “Liberation through education”. Students are in classes of 50; rely upon blackboard ‘chalk and talk’ style learning and teaching and face cut-throat National Examinations at Grade 6, 8 and 10. Their work ethic, optimism, faith and determination is simply inspiring, as is their ability to even get to school each day given the barriers many of them face.

Students live in conditions that are almost impossible for us to comprehend through Western eyes. A family group of ten may live in a slum residence the size of a typical Australian garden shed. Clothes are washed in putrid streams and availability of food is inconsistent. Many students fossick through the dumps to find plastics and other recyclables that may provide an opportunity to earn a dollar or two for food. The slums are also the home to many criminals, providing an ideal hiding place from the law, and cases of physical and sexual abuse are common, especially against young girls and women.

Thank you to both Simon and Mark for sharing their stories. Mark Waddington has written a powerful longer reflection on his time in Africa which you can read at www.hobart.catholic.org.au
The students at Larmenier Catholic School, St Leonards, are part of the St Vincent de Paul Society’s ‘Mini Vinnies’ program and on Friday August 23 the participants were presented with ‘Mini Vinnies’ badges in recognition of the good works they do for the Society.

State Membership Manager, Danusia Kaska, supports all members of St Vincent de Paul Society, and says it is a great privilege to see the enthusiasm and compassion that the children in primary schools have to help those less fortunate than themselves.

“The children at Larmenier” says Danusia, “have worked hard throughout the year to support the Society in various ways. One example of their good works was during winter, when the children very generously collected and gave food, clothes and toys to support the people assisted by the Society. We came to collect the items and spoke about some of the hardships that these people endure, especially during the cold winter months, and so how important their donations were to help in this cause.”

Another work the children undertake is to sponsor students under the Assist a Student program. Each year they run a cake stall for this.

They also have a wonderful ministry to the residents at Mt Esk Nursing Home next door to the school. They read to them, make cards and pom poms for them and visit with their ferrets and other pets.

It all goes to prove, you’re never too young to help out in the community.

On Monday St Cuthbert’s Catholic School, Lindisfarne, was fortunate to have a visit from Christian author, Andrew McDonough, in his first trip to Tasmania. Andrew conducted a workshop with each Learning Unit on how a book is developed and gave tips and ideas for writing and showed the students how to draw cartoon illustrations.

Andrew is an engaging speaker and all the students had a great experience. Many students took the opportunity to purchase one of Andrew’s ‘Lost Sheep’ series of books and have it signed by the author. Andrew will pay another visit to St Cuthbert’s either next year or in 2015.

Lachlan Marsh, St Cuthbert’s

The students at Stella Maris Catholic School, Burnie enjoyed a full day of activities about India that included yoga, rangoli designing, mehendi and learning the Hindi numbers 1-6 to play some traditional board games. One Grade 5 class extended their activities to include mehendi with henna paste, food and drink tasting, sari wearing, bindi making, mudra and Bollywood dancing.

Some of the comments from excited students:

“A bindi is a jewel that Indian women wear in between their eyebrows on special occasions. I liked doing this because I felt I was in India and it was fun.”

“Last Friday we did mehendi painting on our hands. Ladies get mehendi when they are getting married. They get the mehendi artist to hide their partner’s initials into the design. The partner needs to find his initials or the lady will be the boss of the marriage.”

“We tried chai tea, raita, mango chutney, poppadums, naan bread and sauriff. Sauriff is interesting. It is a mint. It is used in Indian medicine. It is often toasted and chewed to freshen the mouth and breath. Sauriff has a light, sweet taste close to aniseed.”

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