

MOTHER TERESA CATHOLIC COLLEGE BALDIVIS
PRINCIPAL'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL COLLEGE COMMUNITY MEETING
17 NOVEMBER 2015

Madam Chairperson, College Board-members, Parents and Staff

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Wadjuk Nungar people and paying my deep respect to their Elders, past, present and future, and acknowledge their ongoing spiritual connection to this Country – and to this land on which Mother Teresa Catholic College now stands.

Firstly, thank you for being here tonight. Your presence here at our College Community Meeting bears witness to your real commitment to our Catholic College. Without your support our students simply would not flourish.

Tonight is about recalling and celebrating our second year in this rapidly growing community, noting this point at which we have arrived on our learning journey, and setting some priorities for next year.

THIS YEAR!

2015 has seen the view from the verandahs of our current Stage 1 Buildings change drastically before our very eyes. Just last week we looked out onto a veritable dust-bowl which has morphed over a couple of days into a lush green ornamental oval – now surrounded by stunning curved buildings of rammed earth and glass. Once again we are indebted to our architects Parry and Rosenthal and specifically to Leon Slattery and Paul Rossen, and to the builders, Focus Building Company and the onsite Manager, Graham Teede. Like all successful ventures, the capital development of Mother Teresa Catholic College has been and will continue to be a team effort – a team of people who communicate and work very well together to follow very detailed and robust plans and procedures and to meet inevitable challenges as they arise.

Buildings are important – but most important in a Catholic College are the students and what happens for them during their time here. What our College staff and families do and achieve by working together for our students is what really makes our vibrant learning community.

Our curriculum and the delivery of learning and teaching has been enriched by a full calendar of special events and experiences spanning across all developmental aspects of each student – spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical – and including events for staff and parents to support student learning and development. In addition to the weekly Assemblies, Class Liturgies and morning-teas, staff meetings, daily prayer-times, literacy, numeracy and Walker Learning sessions, specialist classes in Indonesian, Music/Drama and Physical Education/Health, and Reading Recovery, - special happenings in the life of our College which have impacted our students this year have included – OSHClub's bushfire evacuation, Parent-teacher information evening, 123 Magic and Emotion Coaching course and sundowners for Kindy parents, the Staff Commissioning Mass, the Stations of the Cross in Holy Week, First Reconciliation meetings, workshops, Retreat and celebration for our Yr 3 children, Mother Teresa's Feast Day Mass and multi-cultural activities, Anzac Assembly, Athletics Carnival, numerous incursions for the whole school and for individual year-levels, relevant excursions for each year-level, Fr Geoff's Golden Jubilee of Priesthood, Pyjama Day for poor families, Day for Daniel, Dance-Sport and Jump Jam Programs, Whole-Staff Professional Learning and Regional Staff Meetings, Book Week Parade, Baldivis Library visits, and upcoming Walkathon Fund-raiser, Swimming lessons, Move-up/Orientation Day and Nativity Play and Family Picnic and Christmas Carols – (still not a comprehensive list).

This broad spectrum of learning experiences is increasing our students' capacity, even from their early years of schooling, to ultimately contribute with confidence, courage and creativity towards making the world a better place for all peoples. To equip our students for their working lives, we work to provide a learning environment in which they will problem solve, develop creative and critical thinking, collaborate, communicate and negotiate, and develop intellectual curiosity. To achieve these skills our learners need to be independent self-starters who are responsible, flexible about learning and able to adapt to change. 'Creativity', 'Communication' and 'Community' continue to be our '3Cs' here at Mother Teresa Catholic College.

WHAT LIES AHEAD IN 2016!

This year we have developed a Strategic Plan for our College effectual from 2015-2017. The Plan has developed through the collaborative effort of our staff, Board and Parents and Friends.

The main features articulated in the Strategic Plan are the Vision, Mission and Values we espouse, along with the set targets for growth in Learning, Engagement, Accountability and Discipleship as well as strategies to achieve those targets over the life of the plan. The strategies include the implementation of five whole-school initiatives to address the spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of our students: the 'Making Jesus Real' framework, the Walker Learning Approach to Inquiry Learning, the KidsMatter framework, Information & Communication Technology (an area in which research released today suggests that Australian students have regressed in international testing results), and the 'Waste-Wise' initiative. Recently all 2015 staff have opted to working in committees according to their particular interest areas, towards implementing these five whole-school initiatives. Parent representatives have been invited to nominate for the KidsMatter and Waste-Wise committees and membership will be determined a little later this evening.

So who are the teachers who will be facilitating these whole-school initiatives in their classrooms for 2016?

Kindergarten Teachers will be Mrs Anita Grimminck (KW) and Mrs Louise Murray (KB) (currently 3-and 4-year-old Kindy teacher at St Brigid's Bridgetown).

Pre-primary Teachers will be Mrs Renee Lea (PPW) and Mr Evan Jones (PPB) who recently completed his final Teaching Practice here after a background studying and working in Graphic and Digital Design.

Year One Teachers will be Miss Laura Smith who completed a Teaching Practice here and has a Commerce degree and has worked in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations before she saw the light (1W), and Mrs Lucia Miller from Good Shepherd CS Kelmscott (1B)

Year Two Teachers will be Miss Loralie Bucknell from Birlirr Ngawayiwu Catholic School Ringer Soak/Yaruman (2B) and Yr (2W) will be shared between Miss Ann Priest (2 days) and Miss Tina De Sousa, from St Bernadette's (3 days)

Year 3 Teachers will be Mrs Charlotte Morgan (3B) and Mr Daniel Burro (3W) from St Columba's South Perth

Year 4 Teacher will be Mrs Aisling Keaney

Year 5 will be shared by Assistant Principals Mrs Janine Moore (previously Principal of St Joseph's Kununurra) and Mr Alan Morrison (previously Principal of Our Lady of the Cape, Dunsborough).

Specialist Teachers will be:

Indonesian – Mrs Kim Rozario

Physical Education – Mrs Lisa Mitchell

Music/Drama – Mrs Natalia Robayo (from Montessori School Rockingham & St Mary's Catholic School, Boyup Brook)

Science – Ms Helen McClenaghan (from St Brigid's Bridgetown)

The Reading Recovery Program will continue with Miss Ann Priest as teacher.

Also in 2016 small-group programs in Early Mathematical Understandings (EMU) will be taught by Mrs Lucia Miller.

Mini-Lit and Multi-Lit are two other small-group programs which will be offered to early and middle primary students to improve their reading skills.

In February next year an external provider will facilitate assessments of all Year 4 and 5 students to identify any students who are Gifted and/or Talented. In early March all Year 3 students will undergo different assessments facilitated by the same external facilitator to identify children who may demonstrate indications of being Gifted and/or Talented. From Term Two identified children will be invited to participate one afternoon per week in a multi-age Enrichment Program..

We will offer 3year-old Kindy when we become registered, hopefully in time to commence in Semester Two.

We also hope to provide individual/small group tuition in piano, keyboard and guitar on a user-pays basis by negotiation between parents who wish their children to undertake this tuition and the tutors.

The Education Assistants and Ancillary Staff cannot be announced tonight as student numbers, special needs and contracts are not yet finalized. So rather than announce only the finalized staff positions, they will all be published in a newsletter when all contracts have been offered and accepted.

FAREWELLS AND THANKS

After some weeks on leave, Mrs Grace Walsh has tendered her resignation from her position as Finance Officer. We thank her for her contribution to our College in its foundation years and wish her well in all her future endeavours.

Also a foundation member, Ms Anne Tan will leave us at the end of this year to assume her promotional position as Assistant to the Head of Primary at MacKillop Catholic College, Busselton. Anne's unfailing creativity, energy, enthusiasm and gift for infecting her Kindy children and Music/Drama students with a love of learning and engagement in the learning adventure – will be greatly missed.

Mrs Kelly Winfield-Hart leaves us to pursue a slightly different kind of creativity from that of teaching – motherhood. We congratulate her and wish her a safe delivery, abundant joy and sufficient sleep when her newborn greets the world (hopefully not before 11 December!). We wish her well for her Parental Leave in 2016.

While earlier I have recorded some of the significant happenings at Mother Teresa Catholic College this year, there have been a significant bunch of events which I have purposefully left until now: - Monthly meetings open to all parents and carers, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day stalls, Book Fairs, Class Parent Representatives, After-school Net-Set-Go coaching, School Banking, Subway lunches, pizza lunch and sausage sizzles, disco, serving Fr Geoff's Jubilee luncheon, Peter Coombes Concert attended by all our children, Quiz Night, morning-teas, Feast-Day assistance fundraising – not to forget the ongoing and often thankless task, undertaken by three P&F members – Patricia Hort, Rebecca Langdon and Mel Baker – to set up library shelves in one of the storage sheds and provide a mobile library to all classes each week. Thank you for encouraging all our children to read in this special way this year through your generosity, efficiency and sheer hard work. All these happenings and more have been driven and led by an enthusiastic and generous five-member Executive of Mother Teresa Catholic College Parents and Friends Association. Three of the five had never met before they had enrolled their children here, and the other two knew each other only slightly from a previous school. By collaborating and working closely and supporting one another they have accomplished so much and the bonus they will tell you is that they have become great friends – testimony to what Mother Teresa's spirit of outreach, inclusivity and generosity can do. Most P&F Executive groups, in my experience as school leader, have had to wear the criticism of being an exclusive clique. Such criticism has often emanated from an excuse for others outside the group to not need to become involved – the 'They don't want my help anyway' sentiment! That kind of criticism, I'm sad to say, often goes with the territory of leadership. The only losers are the ones who don't bother to get involved. Those who *do* get involved, often find life-long friendships in the making.

But for now please join me in our sincere acknowledgement and thanks to the four Executive members who after nearly two years of generous service are vacating their positions: President Kim Dawes, Vice-President Laura Kezic, Secretary Kali Langley and Treasurer Kelly Moses. I now ask them to please come forward to accept a small token of our appreciation for all their great work leading the MTCC P&F.

The fifth member, Gemma Dabala, has agreed to continue in 2016 as the P&F Representative on the College Board.

The other group of people whom I am privileged to thank is the inaugural Mother Teresa Catholic College Board, which was appointed at last year's Annual General Community Meeting and will continue through 2016. Our Parish Priest Fr Geoff has continued to support the college in many ways including serving as an Ex-Officio member of the College Board, celebrating class and college liturgies with us, meeting and visiting current and prospective college families and attending college assemblies and events. The sharing of facilities between the Parish and the College, and provision of the Covered Area for weekend parish Masses and Sacramental Celebrations make for a mutually beneficial relationship between parish and college.

My heartfelt thanks to all staff-members who have given generously and tirelessly of their time and talents well beyond the call of duty to the students and families of our college throughout this year. Our current teachers have already been mentioned by name – thank you all. They have been solidly and consistently supported in their classrooms by our wonderful band of Education Assistants: Meg Armitage, Georgina Elphinstone, Michelle Grove, Tameka Slomp, Emma Da Silva, Jane Pastore, Mary Mulry and for the last two terms, Joe-Anne Buchan and Melissa Dawson. Thank you all! Our Counsellor, Robyn Dixon, has supported children, parents and staff, throughout this year, and happily is able to increase her time with us next year to one and a half days per week, adding coordination of our KidsMatter initiative to her role. And this last semester we have enjoyed Australian Government funding which has provided us with experienced teacher Melanie Dusterhoft Mavrick, whose role here is as Defence Force Transition Aide, providing a variety of support to the increasing number of Defence families in our College.

Of course, no school can operate without welcoming and efficient administrative staff – the glue that holds all of us, parents, staff and students, together. Thank you to Raelene Ritikis, Jane Pastore and Mary Gray – and special thanks to Jane Pastore, who relinquished her role as Kindy EA to assume the role of Finance Officer while Grace Walsh has been on leave, and who has agreed to continue in that very demanding and crucial role until the end of the year. Thank you!

Finally, we have been blessed with four wonderful contributors to the school who work here on contract and have given generously of their time and talents throughout 2015. Thank you to Carmen Coombs, Coordinator of MTCC's outstanding OSHClub (out-of-school-hours care); to Terry Holcombe, our cleaner since the school opened; to Terry Jackson, our maintenance-man; and Guy Pereira our gardener. Thank you for the great work you have done, largely anonymously, week-in week-out, in the service of our college family.

In February 2014, Mother Teresa Catholic School opened its gates for the first time to 113 children from Kindy to Yr 2 in 5 class groups with a total staff of 13 (head-count).

In February 2015 there were 201 children enrolled at the school from Kindy to Yr 3 in 7 class groups with a total staff of 19 (head-count).

As of today, we are expecting 315 students in 2016 from Kindy to Yr 5. (There are still others seeking to fill vacancies, and a significant waiting-list on some already full classes). There will be 12 class groups and 10 new teachers with a total staff of 31(head-count) in 2016.

With the rapid growth of our college and significant numbers of new students and staff each year, effectively we have had a new school in 2014 and 2015 and in 2016 we'll have a new College. It is our collective responsibility to be welcoming and to take care to disseminate information anew without assuming that the new families will just 'know' how we go about College life and learning here.

Happily, the planning for Stage 3 buildings of our College, which has already commenced, will continue throughout 2016, giving us a break from physical building sites and all that they imply. (I'm seriously hoping to be able to reduce my working week from 70+ to 50 hours a week in 2016 – and maybe win back a bit of a life beyond school for the year – I live in hope!). At the same time I want to acknowledge Assistant Principal Janine Moore. Her arrival at MTCC this year has certainly made a positive difference to my life – as well as to the lives of every student represented here tonight and all the other students besides. She "hit the ground running" in January, effectively relieving me of much of the day-to-day running of the school. I may not have survived this year without her help.

Our college families continue to come from all over the world, reflective of the wider Baldivis community.

At Mother Teresa Catholic College, we celebrate difference, and understand that difference is not something to be afraid of – rather, accepting and embracing our differences enriches all of us. We all strive to continue each day to grow "**Strong in Faith and Love**", as our school motto states. Mother Teresa's spirit of outreach and love for all human beings, especially the poor and unwanted, continues to inspire and motivate us – in her words: "Let us together do something beautiful for God".

Geri O'Keefe (PRINCIPAL)