

**ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S THE 39 STEPS**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8:00pm July 22-23  
 8:00pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24, 25, 26, 27  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Mount Clear Auditorium  
 Bookings 53 505747

**FOREIGNERS from HOME**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24, 25, 26, 27  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Mount Clear Auditorium  
 Bookings 53 505747

**Fame the musical**  
 Live from!  
 8pm July 26, 27, 28, 29  
 2pm Matinee July 31  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**DAMASCUS COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS**  
 8pm July 26-29  
 2pm Matinee July 29  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**GREASE**  
 It's electrifying!  
 8pm July 25-26  
 2pm Matinee July 28  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**DAMASCUS COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS PRESENTS JOSEPH**  
 An Amazing Story  
 8pm 25, 26, 27, 28 July  
 2pm Matinee 29 July  
 DAMASCUS COLLEGE VALDA WARD AUDITORIUM  
 TICKETS AT [WWW.DAMASCUS.VIC.EDU.AU](http://WWW.DAMASCUS.VIC.EDU.AU)

**THE CRUCIBLE**  
 by Arthur Miller  
 8pm July 26-29  
 2pm Matinee July 29 2017  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**BEACH**  
 A Musical Fantasy  
 8pm July 26-29  
 2pm Matinee July 29 2017  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**GEORGE ORWELL'S ANIMAL FARM**  
 What happens in a farm is what happens in a nation!  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**THE WIZ**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**IT'S A BIRD IT'S A PLANE... SUPERMAN!**  
 A New Musical Comedy  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**The Smelly Poppies**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Phone Bookings: 53 30297

**MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**The Diary of Anne Frank**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24, 25, 26, 27  
 2pm Matinee 28 July  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Book seats at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au) or tickets at doo

**Annie**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 25, 26, 27, 28  
 at 8pm  
 2pm Matinee 29 July at 8pm  
 Damasci College Auditorium  
[www.trybooking.com](http://www.trybooking.com)

**LOUIS LOMBARDO'S COZI**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 25, 26, 27, 28  
 2pm Matinee 29 July 2018  
 DAMASCUS COLLEGE AUDITORIUM MOUNT CLEAR  
 BOOKINGS THROUGH THE OFFICE 5333 0000

**THE FINAL HOURS 2019**  
 8pm 16 April  
 8pm 17 April  
 10pm 18 April  
 8pm 19 April

**Seussical**  
 The magical world of Dr. Seuss on stage!  
 Music by Stephen Flaherty  
 Lyrics by Lynn Collins  
 Thursday July 20,  
 Friday July 21,  
 Saturday July 22  
 at 8:00pm.  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**SUNRISE SUNSET**  
 By Chris Decker  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

**Footloose**  
 Directed by Andrew Selary  
 8pm July 24-25  
 2pm Matinee July 27  
 Valda Ward Auditorium  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

# The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE  
 SPRING 2019

**Walk the way of the Cross**  
 8pm 16 April  
 8pm 17 April  
 10pm 18 April  
 8pm 19 April  
 Tickets at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)



# OUR COVER

Performing Arts Production posters  
from last 20 years

On 19 October 2019 the community celebrated 20 years of Performing Arts at Damascus College. Past and current students and staff, gathered at a reunion to celebrate all those who took part in band choir, drama and musical productions. The front cover images are the actual design and artwork from each of the 20 production posters performed at Damascus College.

Contributions to The Road can be sent to:  
DAMASCUS COLLEGE  
Alumni & Development Office  
1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear VIC 3350  
[connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au)

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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MATTHEW BYRNE

Welcome to the spring edition of The Road. Spring is genuinely with us here in Ballarat and the Murnong daisy is flowering down in the bush at the back of campus. This insignificant daisy draws our connection to our Indigenous brothers and sisters who walked this land for millennia and used this little yam as a food source. The school setting is a beautiful one—a source of pride and focus of contemplation for anyone who has been part of this community. The beauty of God’s creation is one of the great joys of the Damascus community and it provides such a rich learning resource for our students in so many ways.

Located at the back of campus, is our mud brick house which was crafted and maintained by students and staff of St Martin’s in the Pines and Damascus College. In late November we will celebrate the creation and refurbishment of the mud brick house which is currently a rich resource for the College’s horticulture program.

In our quest to establish first-rate learning facilities for our school community we have recently moved into our refurbished science facilities and new music room. These are both fresh and contemporary learning amenities to support the great work of the Damascus staff. Performing arts is such a central part of our Damascus history and having the facilities to extend our music program is something we are very excited about. The refurbished science spaces support a project-based approach to learning and the new configuration will strongly support science, technology, engineering and mathematics through the Damascus Esteem program. If you are on site, please take the opportunity to see these beautiful spaces.

There has been so much happening across our community over recent months. The production of *Around the World in 80 Days* was a great success. Subsequently, it was lovely to meet up with so many members of the dramatic arts fraternity at our reunion on 19 October 2019. We have launched the Sustainable Racing Team in 2019, drawing on the rich foundations of Damascus Energy Break Through, and we

are looking forward to a strong showing in Maryborough in a few weeks’ time. Our diverse learning team have been working hard in 2020 to support all students to engage with their learning experience optimally and this has been a significantly expanded function across the College. We have undertaken a rowing review in 2019 and made some great additional appointments to the team; we look forward to the consolidation of the program as another fantastic opportunity for young Damascus people. Our alumni team have supported a great range of reunions this year and it has been a joy to catch up with returning members of our College.

At this time of year we begin the process of celebrating those who have contributed so much to our community and are moving on. Loretta Kaval will retire at the end of 2019 following 25 years of service at Sacred Heart and Damascus as a teacher librarian. Loretta continued the service of her mother Monica Morgan as a professional and passionate educator and faith leader and we wish her well as she moves into retirement.

Nancy Meiklejohn will also retire at the end of this year. Nancy did a year at St Martin’s back in 1985 and then joined the Damascus staff in 1995. Nancy’s collective 25 years of service to this community will see many reflect on the affirming and energetic educator and great role model she has been.

Noelene Ward will also retire at the conclusion of 2019. Noelene joined the Damascus staff in 2003. Noelene has contributed strongly to the foundations of Indonesian here and her 16 years of service will be warmly celebrated as our year draws to a close.

Enjoy this jam-packed edition of The Road and if you get a chance, come out to the College and reacquaint yourself with the beauty of the sight.





# PERFORMING ARTS REUNION

DAMASCUS COLLEGE EVENT

Damascus College was thrilled to welcome more than 80 alumni back to the “Audi” on Saturday 19 October 2019 for the inaugural performing arts reunion.

The 2019 Damascus College Performing Arts reunion was a special event to honour the long history of drama and music at the College. Everyone who had taken part in band, choir, drama and musical productions were invited to attend this celebration. In addition to past students and staff returning to reminisce and celebrate their experience with performing arts, a number of current students and staff also joined in the festivities.

Registration opened at 2.30pm in the undercroft, where attendees enjoyed an opportunity to mingle with a drink and sample some canapés and other delicious nibbles.

After the reception in the undercroft, attendees were led on a campus tour by current students and staff, showing alumni many of the spaces they remembered from their time at Damascus, and pointed out the vast amount of work that has taken place at the College. Guests were especially impressed by the new science classrooms, the beautiful

landscaping and the reimagined space within the St Martin’s Resource Centre.

The formal proceedings for the event took place in the Valda Ward Auditorium, the mecca for this cohort, who were celebrating their ties to performing arts. The space had been decorated with an archive display procured from the drama department that featured props, costumes, press clippings, programs and yearbook excerpts from throughout the history of productions at Damascus. This display, along with a photo display of more than 250 pictures, assisted with the trip down memory lane—an integral part of every reunion.

Sarah Boswell, Leader of School Development, welcomed the assembled crowd before the first performance. Patrick Western, a Year 11 student, reprised his role of Joseph and treated the audience to ‘Any Dream Will Do’ from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat.

Andrew Seery, current Performing Arts Coordinator for Damascus was then welcomed to the stage where he took the group on a 20-year journey celebrating performing arts at Damascus College.

Year 11 student Jack Davidson presented a reflection on his time so far in performing arts. Jack has been involved in performing arts since Year 7 and is hoping to join the ranks of the "sixers", which is a special group of students who have had a role in each year's all-school production. The performing arts program offered at Damascus College was a determining factor in Jack enrolling at Damascus and he is one of its brightest stars.

Past student and college captain, Kaitlyn Cooper, Class of 2009, was the next to speak. She shared with the gathered crowd her journey as a student, and how much being a part of performing arts meant to her as both an actor on the stage and later as a stage manager.

The final alumni speaker was Daniel West, Class of 1997. Dan began his journey at Damascus as a Year 7 student at foundation school St Paul's in 1992 and finished his high school education at Damascus College in 1997. Dan then returned to the College as a staff member in 2007 and stayed until 2012. Dan is now shaping and engaging young minds as a primary school teacher.

Current school captain Milly Frost was the next to take to the stage. Milly developed an eclectic physical solo performance based on the 1995 film Toy Story, titled 'The Toy'. The plot of the performance entails that on the eve of Andy's 13th birthday his toys hold an emergency meeting in his bedroom. An optimistic 'Toy' tries to allay the other toys' fears that they will be made obsolete by a new birthday present and tries to convince them that they are all still relevant.

At this time everyone was invited to investigate the "Audi" and the music rooms. They were encouraged to revisit the wall and stand once again on the stage of the Valda Ward Auditorium.

Matthew Byrne, Principal of Damascus, acknowledged the work of past and current students and staff and shared with the assembled group his pride for performing arts at the College.







# AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS

2019 COLLEGE PRODUCTION

This year's drama production was *Around the World in 80 Days*, performed on 24–27 July with a small cast of 17 performers that played over 50 characters.

It featured a highly visual style that incorporated elements of classic farce, storytelling and crazy transformation. Directed by Performing Arts Coordinator Andrew Seear, it was a wonderful stage adaptation of the classical adventure novel by Jules Verne. The sheer spirit of theatrical imagination combined to produce a fun show that took the audience around the world in eighty days.

The 2019 cast:

Patrick Western as Phileas Fogg  
Luka Spoljaric as Passepartout  
Stuart McLennan  
Brady Lucas  
Liana Canfield  
Gemma Angeli  
Sarah Buck  
Amalee Eden  
Georgina Campbell  
Tully Heenan  
Jack Davidson  
Amy Wells  
Milly Frost  
Isla Casey  
Ellie Dickson  
Hallie Vermeend  
Declan Eden









Music Facility

# BUILDING PROJECTS

## MASTERPLAN

Damascus College is an innovative and progressive learning institution where we strive to continually seek ways to improve, to innovate and to value add so that our students, staff and community receive the best possible educational experience possible.

### Science and Music Building Projects

The Science rooms were refurbished and a new Music facility was developed, over a 9 month build, with classes commencing in Term 4 2019.



Refurbished Science Classroom

### Gathering Space and Examination Centre

The next stage of the Damascus College Master plan will commence in November 2019, with the construction of a new Gathering Space and Examination Centre.

This beautiful facility will sit on the site of the former Sisters of Mercy Convent and will extend the learning and community-building capability of the school. This will be a facility for our entire College community and will borrow vistas from our beautiful setting. It is planned to be in use for Term 4, 2020.

This new two storey state of the art building has been designed to be sympathetic to our bush environment and is in keeping with the current architecture on the Damascus campus.

The College will fund the construction of the project from existing reserves.



Music Classroom





Interior Foyer



Interior Event Examination Space



Exterior



Gathering Space and Examination Centre





# MOTHER BONAVENTURE HEALY RSM

DAMASCUS COLLEGE SISTER OF MERCY

The strength and spirit of Mother Bonaventure are evident throughout Ballarat. Known as 'The Builder', where Mother Bonaventure saw a need, she found a way to build a solution.

Born in 1888, Eileen Mary Healy, along with her sisters Kathleen, Josephine and Gertrude, was herself educated at Sacred Heart College before gaining a Diploma of Music and Diploma of Education at Melbourne University. At the age of twenty, she returned to Ballarat where she entered the novitiate of the Sisters of Mercy and was professed three years later. All four sisters were particularly talented musicians and each left a lasting legacy on the College.

Mother Bonaventure's many building projects included the development of Patrician House, a hostel for undergraduates of the (then) Aquin Teachers Training College, construction of the many buildings at Sacred Heart College, four Ballarat primary schools, and convents and schools in 13 other regional areas. When she decided that sporting facilities at Sacred Heart College were lacking, Mother Bonaventure planned a nine-hole golf course on unused land at Mount Xavier—the first public golf course to be built and owned by a convent. This was opened in 1949 and was well-used by Sacred Heart girls. In the early days of the Ballarat East Sisters of Mercy, 'walking nuns' would visit the sick and poor in their homes. Mother Bonaventure systemised this relief effort, which led her to inaugurate the Mercy Home Care and Nursing Service—an early version of the Mercy Health and Community Services we know today.

Perhaps the most well-known of Mother Bonaventure's projects is the beautiful piece of land upon which Damascus College currently resides. By 1959, Sacred Heart College was bursting at the seams and Mother Bonaventure was dreaming of a spacious, modern senior school to meet the challenge of overcrowding. Land bequeathed to the sisters in 1960 enabled this dream to become a reality, and Mother Bonaventure was involved in everything from planning to turning the first sod and laying the foundation stone. Her fervent prayers to St Martin de Porres for the successful completion of the new school are reflected in the beautiful statue which now stands in the St Martin's Resource Centre. Sadly, Mother Bonaventure died in 1966 before seeing the first students arrive at the senior college; however, she left us this wonderful place of beauty and learning.



Eileen Healy (M. Bonaventure) centre row left, Kathleen Healy (Sr Francis Xavier) front row left. Circa 1900



Turning the first sod celebration for Sacred Heart Senior Campus in 1965









## 2019 TIMOR-LESTE IMMERSION REFLECTION

CAROLINE NOLAN

On 19 June 2019, a group of thirteen Year 11 students and four staff met at the Ballarat Railway Station ready to begin the Timor-Leste Immersion. Among the group there were experienced travellers, some of whom were returning to Timor-Leste after visits in previous years, and there were students who had never been on an aeroplane. It was almost a decade since I had visited Timor-Leste and I was keen to go back and see how it had changed.

An important part of the immersion process is fundraising to support our sister school, Santa Maria College, in Ainaro and a variety of NGOs that work towards a better future for Timor-Leste. Through a variety of fundraising efforts, the parents, staff and students raised a total of over \$20,000. An amazing effort!

While visiting Ainaro it is expected that the students work in teams to teach classes to the Santa Maria students; essentially, this is teaching English through another topic. There was a large amount of planning and the 2019 immersion team should be congratulated for the creativity of their ideas, such as 'Pollution' and 'Australian Road Rules'.

The journey to Ainaro is not as straightforward as one would think, considering that Timor-Leste is one of our nearest neighbours. Mercifully, the new road to Ainaro, albeit still under construction, was much better than the stomach-turning journey I remembered from my previous trip. After a short stop to visit Sr Mary Ann in Aileu, an exhausted group finally arrived at our home for the next week, Villa Maria. The students were too tired and hungry to really appreciate its rustic appeal.

We all expected that Saturday would be a day of rest and relaxation; we would have the opportunity to get a feel for the geography of Ainaro. None of us remembered that Santa Maria has school on

Saturday mornings. We were woken by a knock at the door from students asking when we were coming up to the school.

Barely unpacked, the teaching pairs were not ready to teach that morning so it was agreed that it would be a get-to-know-you session with introductions and ice-breaker games. By the time we left at midday, practically the whole school was involved in the biggest game of 'Duck, duck go!' This ended when the bells were rung and the Santa Maria students stopped to pray the noon Angelus, reminding the immersion group that we were indeed in a Catholic country.

The next day we got up early for Sunday Mass. The significance of this event was not wasted on the immersion group and they observed how families arrived from all directions dressed in their Sunday best; so many attended that they didn't actually fit into the relatively large church.

Over the course of the week, we spent the mornings working in the school and the afternoons exploring the local area and learning more about the history and life of Ainaro people. We were escorted by the senior students on outings to Sebagalau, Jakarta II, Sora and the Dokomali Waterfall; each involved a large amount of walking in very hilly terrain. We also got to visit the primary school, Sao Paulo, to present the gifts from Emmaus Primary School to their sister school.

The final few days of the trip were spent in Dili and on the Friday we again visited some more of the places supported by the fundraising. I was personally moved by the visit to Killbur Domin, a Ryder Cheshire supported organisation that works to fight tuberculosis in Timor-Leste.

By Caroline Nolan, Maths Learning Area Leader



# 2019 TIMOR-LESTE IMMERSION REFLECTION

HANNAH VANDERLINDEN

I chose to go to Timor because I wanted to put into perspective how well I have it living here in Australia.

Each student got so much out of the six days in Ainaro, with each of us having a million different stories we could tell and a million different lessons we learnt. Spending time with the students gave me a whole new perspective on education and motivation at school.

This year we were lucky enough to be given around 30 minutes after each lesson to be interviewed by the students so that they could practise their English; this gave us an amazing chance to have conversations and really deepen our connections with the students. After an amazing six days in Ainaro, and an emotional and beautiful goodbye, we headed to Dili to donate the funds we raised to different organisations that are working towards a better future for the youth of Timor.



Dili was such a different experience to Ainaro, and we also spent time being tourists. We were driven around in a bus to countless spots in Dili; we experienced more local foods, witnessed some beautiful sunsets, climbed 500 (and something) stairs to Cristo Rei and went to two different historical museums and learnt of the horrific happenings of the very recent past in Timor. Each student and teacher took a lot out of our three days in Dili and I personally felt very humbled to be a part of such a beautiful thing.

Overall, I am so proud of myself and the amazing group of people for going to Timor and immersing ourselves in their culture and way of life. I am very thankful that I had this experience and would highly recommend it to anyone looking for a new challenge.

By Hannah Vanderlinden, Year 11 student



# 2019 TIMOR-LESTE IMMERSION REFLECTION

THOMAS BYRNE

My name is Tom, and I recently returned from the 2019 Timor-Leste Immersion. After a lengthy application, interview and selection process, the 2019 immersion team quickly began preparations for our trip, formulating potential fundraising plans and researching our destination, Ainaro.

When the time eventually came for us to depart, we spent roughly 24 hours travelling. The week we spent in Ainaro was unforgettable; we spent a few hours every day teaching English to the wonderful students of Santa Maria. This was an achievement in itself—forming relationships with students that had limited English skills proved easier than one might think. Most students were eager to learn and as such were very outgoing.

Our off time was spent either checking out local areas of significance or interacting with the locals. A highlight for me was the Taekwondo class we were invited to participate in. I am sure we were worthy opponents. The Thursday we spent in Ainaro was my favourite part of the trip as we taught our final lessons before venturing up to Doko Mali, a spectacular waterfall. We unintentionally constructed a convoy of Timorese students that followed our bus to the waterfall and back on their motorbikes. That evening, we were treated to some beautiful performances by the students of Santa Maria at our farewell ceremony, before bidding farewell to our newfound friends.

I would highly recommend that any students considering applying for the 2020 trip do so as soon as they possibly can—it really was an amazing experience that I will never forget. Best of luck to those applying.

By Thomas Byrne, Year 11 student





1928 Sacred Heart concert produced by Sr Aquinas Mockett



Costumes by Sr Francis Xavier Healy Circa 1927



Sacred Heart College concert Circa 1895

## STELLAR COSTUMES

### BLAST FROM THE PAST

Right from the early beginnings of Sacred Heart, the annual College production proved to be one of the highlights of the school year.

In December 1896, the Ballarat Star reported the quality of performances as “proving that the instruction, both literary and musical, imparted at this school was of high order”. It was not only the performances that were of top quality, but the costuming as well, as evidenced by these beautiful photographs.

The students of Sacred Heart College were well known for their musical ability, and as these students often went on to join the Convent of Mercy themselves, their musical talent was passed down through generations of girls.

One such example of this was the Healy sisters, Kathleen, Gertrude, Josephine and Eileen. All had exceptional musical talent, with Kathleen and Gertrude studying in Germany and London after leaving school. Kathleen entered the Convent of Mercy in 1924 as Sr Francis Xavier, and was known and loved for her ability to create wonderfully detailed costumes as wardrobe mistress. Gertrude entered the convent as Sr Catherine of Sienna and became a much-loved teacher of music.

Over the years, Damascus College and its foundation schools have produced a wide range of performances, from energetic musicals to more sombre plays. Costumes are always creative and the performers enthusiastic. From *Animal Farm* to *Fame*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* to *Grease*, the dedicated staff and students who bring these stories to life are a delight to watch each and every year.



# ASAKO VISITS DAMASCUS

## ALUMNI STORY

On Thursday 8 August 2019 (one of the coldest days of the year) Asako Shikanai (nee Watanabe), Class of 1990, her young sons Junta, 10 and Daiki, 7 paid a visit to Damascus College. They were on holidays in Australia from Tokyo, Japan and Asako was keen to see her old school as well as show it off to her children.

At the tender age of 15, Asako spent Year 11 at Damascus as a Japanese exchange student, some 30 years ago. She had competed in a competition run by Youth for Understanding and was fortunate enough to come to Australia for 1989.

Damascus College has grown and changed dramatically from Asako's time as a student, but the foundation is still here and plain to see. She enjoyed seeing the iconic statue of St Martin de Porres, and the familiar structure of the Catherine McAuley Wing, with the undercroft still being used as the canteen and student gathering space.

The expansion of the campus, the modernisation of classrooms and the increased number of students (over 1000), still on the same 50 acres from her time, impressed her and her young sons.

Robyn Flintoft, Asako's host mother during her time as an exchange student, had arranged for her to come and tour the College during her holidays. It was lovely to see Robyn and Asako here together, sharing memories and stories of 1989.

Robyn remembered that Asako rode her bike to school and how her parents were unsure if St Martin's in the Pines would be the right school for their daughter. Her dad was a public prosecutor and her mother a pharmacist. Robyn confirmed that Sr Valda had set their minds at ease and Asako's parents were ultimately very pleased with the education she received during her time in Australia.



Asako 1989



Robyn, Junta, Asako and Daiki 2019





# TOM TAKES FLIGHT IN THE NUTCRACKER

THOMAS STEVENS

Thomas Stevens, a Year 7 student at Damascus College, has a passion for dance, in particular classical ballet.

He was recently invited to be a part of the children's cast of The Nutcracker in September at the State Theatre, located within the Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Usually children are chosen for these types of performances from the Australian Ballet School; however, Thomas was chosen as members of the Australian Ballet School saw his performance at the Royal Academy of Dance showcase and the Ballet Teachers' Workshop, and they then emailed his mum to extend the invitation.

"I am extremely excited about being a part of The Nutcracker, as I will get the chance to be on stage with my idols—the principal artists, senior artists and members of The Australian Ballet Company," he said.

"It is such a wonderful opportunity and one that I am truly grateful to be a part of. I also get to perform with one of Australia's greatest dancers, Ms Audrey Nicholls, OAM FRAD. It's also a professional role so it means I get paid."

Thomas practises ballet every day after school and every Saturday; he is also in the Academy's ITP (intensive training program), which is designed for students wanting a career in dance. As well as ballet he also takes classes in jazz, contemporary, acro, Pilates and PTB (progressing ballet technique), and he also performed as part of Ballarat's Royal South Street dance eisteddfod.

Dancing has given Thomas many opportunities: he participated in the Alana Haines competition in New Zealand and he hopes to perform in Sydney next year at the Sydney Eisteddfod; he would also love to perform at the Youth America Grand Prix in New York.

"My favourite class at school is drama, and I also enjoy food technology. After secondary college I would like to join a professional ballet company, and I dream of one day being a principal artist at a ballet company, preferably The Royal Ballet in England."





Jack 2015



Jack 2019

## MY LOVE OF PERFORMING ARTS

JACK DAVIDSON

Hi! My name is Jack, and I am a Year 11 student. I have been fortunate enough in my time here at the College to have performed in all school productions since starting Year 7. I have performed in *The 39 Steps* as Mr Memory-Salesman 2 and *Others*, *Grease* as Johnny Casino, *The Crucible* as Giles Corey, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* as Potiphar and Ensemble, *Around the World in 80 Days* as Sir Francis-Andrew Speedy and others and season 15 of *The Final Hours* as Pontius Polite.

Throughout my time at Damascus, I have been in many auditions. I have been fortunate enough to have the full support of the production team and my peers to help, encourage and coach me through these daunting periods. I have fond early memories of auditioning for *The 39 Steps*; I was extremely nervous as I had watched previous Damascus College productions and I knew before I started that I wanted to become a part of history at the College.

I performed my first monologue to Mr Andrew Seeary and Miss Nicole Burness, who were kind enough to embrace this little Year 7 with very minimal prior knowledge in the area of performing arts. I still thank them both to this day for the opportunities they first presented to me in my first show. Within the last couple of years, I have been able to work and get better at auditions and I look forward to auditioning for projects outside of Damascus in the future, with these previous experiences as a guide.

In my early days, performing as one of the 13 cast members in *The 39 Steps*, I learnt a lot about the craft of performing with the support of senior cast members who took me under their wing to show me the process and teach me the traditions of the performing arts department. But I also thank Andrew Seeary and Nicole Burness for their support and patience in teaching me techniques and skills that were being

taught in senior year levels. I still hold *The 39 Steps* as my favourite production I have done at the College.

You may be wondering how much work is involved behind the finished product of a show, and I will tell you it is a lot! I have been fortunate to perform in both plays and musicals and both are different in their rehearsal processes, with one being sung and including dancing, and one with mostly dialogue and blocking movements.

Most of what the performers do on the stage is just the finished product of what the show has been made into, but the show does not work without the support of local businesses and organisations like SLC and BLOC, past students, families, musicians, set builders and (most importantly) the staff—they make this whole thing happen!

At Damascus, this includes Andrew Seeary, Maria Russell, Nicole Burness and Vicki Rowe. These staff members really do put in many tireless hours to make these shows so special and such a professional experience for everyone involved.

I get so much out of all these shows I have been a part of! I have learnt so much about the craft of acting and music, and also important life skills and morals that I still hold to this day. I don't think I could have ever done this without the support and spirit of the Damascus performing arts department and its people!

Within this year's College theme of 'But who do you say I am?', I say I am supported and have the opportunity to be the best I can be and to hopefully inspire others in the future to be the best they can be.

By Jack Davidson, Year 11 student





Rachael 2014



Rachael 2019

## THEN AND NOW

### ALUMNI STORY

My Damascus College journey began in 2009 at the Vic St campus; I then moved to the Mt Clear Campus in Year 9 when the junior and senior campuses amalgamated. As a student, I loved all of the new opportunities that were available at Damascus. I participated in so many sports, one of my favourites being orienteering in Year 10, and have always loved the athletics carnival (still do!). I was heavily involved in the arts department, completing studio arts photography and accelerated art. I was lucky to present my final unit 3/4 art piece at the Ballarat Art Gallery. I was also a top 25 finalist in the Moran Prize photography competition out of 8000 entries, as well as receiving 3rd prize at the Deakin Photographic Prize in Werribee.

I also dabbled in the drama department, joining the Footloose cast in Year 8; I also directed a student play for a showcase night and photographed the Superman school production. Another highlight of school for me was the camps and retreats. My Year 9 camp experience at the Otways has always been a fond memory of mine. I love being outdoors and it was a great week of triumphs and tribulations with friends. I'm also a proud Rice member and was pleased to showcase an artwork video in my final year of schooling at a Rice assembly and at the end-of-year awards night.

Since graduating in 2014 I have worked as a photographer at the Ballarat Wildlife Park and travelled, and I am grateful to have been

working as a learning support officer at Damascus since 2015. I have been lucky to experience many things as a staff member of Damascus, such as working in the classroom across all year levels, supporting student camps and even participating in a secret staff Flash Mob at this year's Damascus Day.

This year I am also lucky to be professionally involved in the former EBT program, now known as the Sustainable Racing Team (SRT), as their program assistant. I love to see the engagement of students within the program and have particularly loved to see the involvement of female students and Year 7s this year.

I believe being a positive role model is a major key to success. Transitioning from student to staff member at Damascus College has provided me with the insight and skills to pursue my goals and effectively support the students I work with.

By Rachael Beardall, Class of 2014  
Damascus College Learning Support Officer











## MY COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING

### ALUMNI STORY

My name is Sally Stevens (nee Steenhuis) and I was a student at Sacred Heart College from 1989 to 1992. In 1992, at the tender age of 16, I left school to undertake a traineeship with a law firm. The traineeship was for a period of 18 months and when completed I received a Certificate IV in Office Administration. After six years of working full-time, I moved to Melbourne to gain some independence and life experience. I have always been a go-getter, and this was no different.

I worked in Melbourne for a few years but I wasn't completely happy and decided to do something different. I saw an ad in the newspaper calling for people to become camp counsellors for Camp America.

“ Being young and having worked full-time for many years, I looked at this as an opportunity to gain a whole new perspective and skill set. ”

So, in 2000, as a 23-year-old, I set off on my overseas adventure.

I worked for a summer camp in the hills of South Lake Tahoe, on the California–Nevada border. The camp was run by the City of Concord, which is just outside of San Francisco. The camp I worked for provided scholarships to underprivileged children. The scholarships were provided to children mostly from migrant, single-parent families. These children lived in housing estates across the city. The camp provided these kids with the opportunity to forget their daily struggles and have fun without judgement or prejudice. I often reflect upon this experience and acknowledge that it has played a big part in shaping who I am.

Upon my return to Australia in late 2000 I met my husband, Craig. We were married in 2003. In 2007 we welcomed our twins, Isabelle and Thomas, and in 2010 our son Mitchell completed our family.

My pregnancy with the twins was a difficult one. At 26 weeks I was hospitalised and placed on complete bed rest. At 32 weeks we welcomed them into the world. They each weighed less than 1 kg and were admitted to the neonatal ICU. After two weeks in ICU they then spent eight weeks in the special care nursery. Faced with the reality



that the twins may not survive, this was one of the most traumatic, yet remarkable, experiences of my life. I was overjoyed when we were finally able to break free from the hospital and take them home. It was during this time that I realised I had more to offer and made a conscious decision to do more.

In 2013, I participated in the Peter Mac Ride to Conquer Cancer. I bought my first bike and started as a complete novice. The ride itself was 200km from Melbourne to Mornington and return. The purpose of the event was to raise much-needed funds for The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Cancer has touched the lives of many of my family and friends, and I was fortunate to have been part of such a worthwhile cause; I was able to raise \$2,500. Later that year, I competed in the Ballarat Iron Man, which was one of the more physically challenging events I had undertaken. Since then, I have participated in many other charity events, including the Mother's Day Classic.

When I was asked to write this story, I began to think not only of the difficult times but also the wonderful moments and achievements in my life. Over the past 26 years I have had many opportunities to broaden my horizons. Along with my Certificate IV, I have also completed an Associate Diploma in Accounting.

It was in 2015 that I decided to take my career in a completely different direction and enrol in the Diploma of Nursing at Australian Catholic University. I chose nursing because I had a strong desire to provide families with the same support, empathy and compassion provided to me and my family during the birth of the twins. I completed the diploma in 2016 and have been working as an endorsed enrolled nurse.

In 2018, I enrolled at ACU once again, this time in the Bachelor of Nursing, and after hard work and many tears, I will graduate in a few months' time. I am very passionate about nursing, research and further education. In February this year I completed a short-term research exchange with Miami University and its campus hospital. Working in various clinical rotations, I was exposed to a range of clinical trials and found this experience to be among the most rewarding moments of my study. ACU has also provided me with an opportunity to volunteer for the Kidney Kids Camp, run by Kidney Health Australia.

I have been offered a graduate position with Ballarat Health Services to commence in 2020 and I look forward to seeing what the future brings. I have already made plans to start my master's degree in 2021 and hopefully my story can inspire others to achieve their goals.

By Sally Stevens, Class of 1994





Eleanor Snibson, Class of 2014, Matthew Snibson, Class of 2016 and Lachlan Snibson, Class of 2011

## A MOTHER'S GRATITUDE

### ALUMNI STORY

It is hard to believe that our youngest to attend Damascus, Matt, Class of 2016, has turned 21 this year! There are so many wonderful and inspiring stories of current and past students.

I have been wanting to share the story of how Damascus has played a part in shaping our three children's characters, and I hope you might find some joy and inspiration from it.

Lachlan, Class of 2011, graduated from RMIT in Chemical Engineering (Hons) in 2015. Matt is finalising the process of entering the navy as a logistics officer, and will soon be travelling the world.

In particular, I want to write about Eleanor, who graduated in the Class of 2014. She is a fifth-year BA-LLB student at the University of Tasmania. In November 2016 Eleanor received a New Colombo Mobility Grant to study Mandarin at the National Taiwan Normal University in Taiwan over the summer holidays. In September 2017, after a year on the executive committee of her residential student club, Ellie was elected president of Christ College for 2018.

In February 2018, when she was preparing to travel back to Hobart for her fourth-year studies, she was diagnosed with an epithelioid sarcoma, a rare and aggressive form of cancer.

Our lives were all thrown into utter despair and turmoil, but we are so impressed with Eleanor's courage and strength. Her faith, determination, and sense of humour exceed all our expectations every day.

Ellie attended daily radiation at the Royal Hobart Hospital for her first semester of 2018, while also completing her studies and her other extra-curricular commitments. Only a few days after her exam in June, Ellie had an eight-hour operation with a team of eight surgeons, including oncology, vascular and plastics at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre,

Melbourne. We have all learnt lessons of strength from Ellie. My brother says that Eleanor is a gift from God for us all to learn from.

Before Ellie's cancer diagnosis, she applied for an exchange semester to study law at the University of Lucerne in Switzerland from September 2018. She received a RedKite National Scholarship, which enabled her to (with her wound still not yet healed, and having to do daily dressings) fly to Europe to have the most amazing five months studying and travelling around Europe. She received the Dr Val Haynes Federation Scholarship in Law six months previously, and the Horst Rottendorf Memorial Scholarship in German the year before.

In Switzerland she applied to a board in Victoria concerned with youth cancer, and had interviews for the board while completing her exams in Switzerland. In December she was successful in becoming a board member of the Victorian and Tasmanian Youth Cancer Board. It was here that a casual conversation with a fellow board member led her to discover that she was Matthew Byrne's (Damascus Principal) niece, Molly Byrne! She is flown to Melbourne regularly to attend meetings and is currently part of the development of a position statement on mental health care in youth cancer. She also attended the National CanTeen conference in Sydney.

Ellie will have six-monthly scans and follow-ups for the next five years. Her latest PET-scan in February showed no evidence of cancer! Eleanor is in her final year and hopes to work overseas. She is currently applying for law clerkships for over the summer period.

Steve and I are very proud of our three children and what they have achieved in life so far, their courage, their determination and their strength; I am thankful to Damascus College for helping to shape them into the wonderful people they are today.

By Elizabeth Snibson



# REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA IN U15 FUTSAL

RORY LUDEMAN

In August 2019 as a Year 10 student I had the honour of wearing the Green and Gold for Australia when I was selected to represent Australia in the U/15 Futsal competition held in Brazil.

I began playing soccer when I was four years old and really loved it, but then one day last year I attended a day at the Ballarat Futsal Centre with Damascus College and discovered that I really had a great time.

Some of the main differences between soccer and futsal are that soccer is an outdoor game and futsal is a type of soccer that is played indoors. As soccer is played outdoors, it is played in a larger field than Futsal, which is played in a smaller field. In a game of soccer three substitutions are allowed, but there are unlimited substitutions in a game of Futsal.

I was picked to be a member of the Victorian Team, School Competition from playing at an event held at the Ballarat Futsal Centre where I was representing Damascus. I played in front of coaches and other members of the selection committee.

The school competition with the Victorian team was played in October last year in Queensland. I had a great time and was successful, which led to my next adventure.

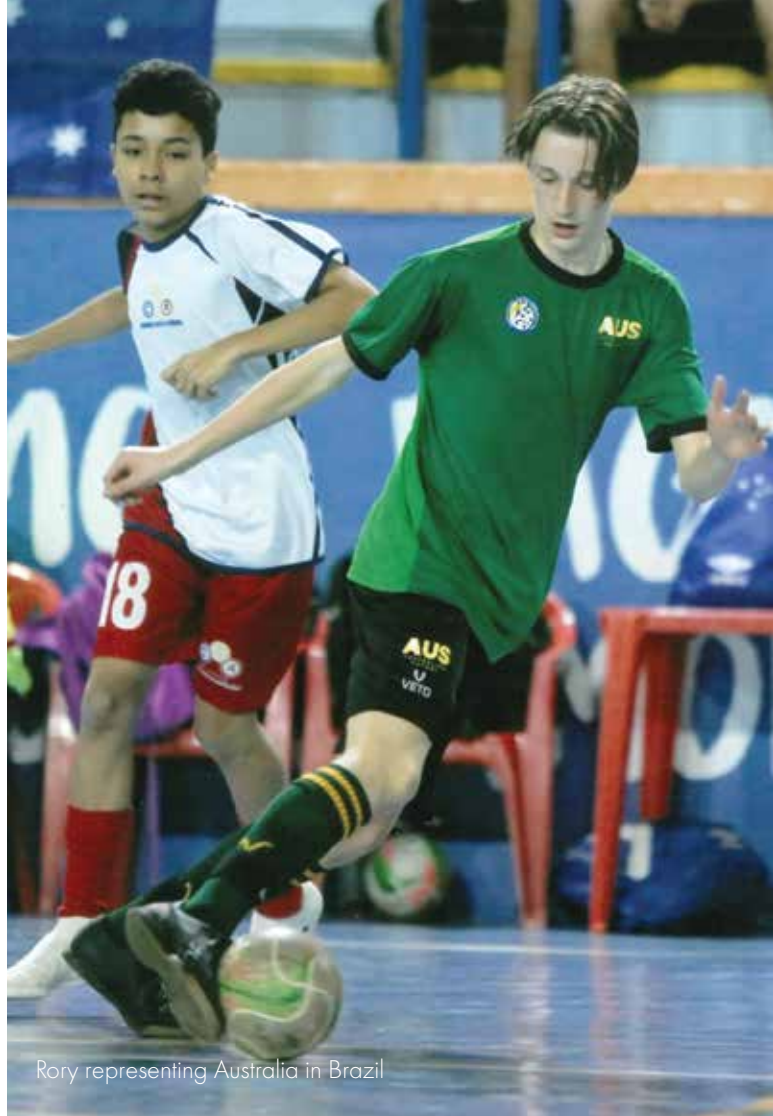
Two days after playing at the event in Queensland, I received an email from the Australian Futsal Association inviting me to join the Australian tour in Brazil as a player in the U15 team.

I felt really privileged. It was a great honour to represent my country.

Wearing the uniform and representing Australia in the futsal tour of Brazil was fantastic. The tour included travelling to three major cities around Brazil, where I competed against local professional clubs. It was challenging to adapt to the vast differences of how the Brazilians play the game and the intensity that they compete at.

As a team, we also had the privilege of being coached by some of the most recognised Futsal coaches in the country. It was truly a great trip that I will never forget.

By Rory Ludeman, Year 10 student



Rory representing Australia in Brazil



Rory and the U15 futsal team representing Australia, top row centre





# IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

LUKA SPOLJARIC

Year 11 student Luka Spoljaric started studying photography in Year 10 and has now explored this passion to a much deeper level. He has recently been selected as a finalist in the ATOM Photo Competition, which is an initiative of Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) in partnership with Ted's Cameras.

The competition provides photographers across Australia and New Zealand with the opportunity to submit a folio of three photographs with an accompanying artist statement. The finalists and prize winners for each category were chosen by a panel of professional photographers, artists, media teachers and industry professionals.

Student categories will be announced at the 2019 SAE ATOM Awards in Melbourne on Wednesday 13 November. Luka has entered the Upper Secondary Category (Year 10–12).

## ARTIST STATEMENT

'Texture' is a term I have been familiar with for quite some time. It was only when I started studying Year 11 photography while still in Year 10 that I actually decided to explore it deeper. Texture, to me, means looking for the little things in a big picture. I particularly like to look for the details in things that have been around for a while, and that's why I decided to explore texture through some older relatives, and an interesting-looking tree in my backyard.

While we can see from afar the wear and tear on some of the older things on this planet, getting up close and personal with a camera allows us to see this wear and tear in much greater detail. I don't see these cemented hardships of life as a bad thing, but instead a sign of a life well lived.

In creating these photos, I used my DSLR Canon 1000D along with the almighty sun to bring light to my subjects. Composition was key in getting these photos right, and I would not stop until I had at least one photograph I could work with and improve. Shutter speeds were kept fairly fast so as to not overexpose the photos in the harsh light of the sun. Photoshop was used to enhance the overall effect that the photos gave, and to improve the visual appeal of them. No major manipulation of the photos took place, just adjustments to such things as the levels, curves, contrast, brightness etc. Making these choices allowed for a much more dramatic effect.

I believe that my photos successfully explore the theme of 'texture' in that you can feel what is being shown without ever actually having to touch it.





# WESTERN BULLDOGS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

JUDE SKEWES-CLINTON

Congratulations to Year 11 student Jude Skewes-Clinton, who graduated from the Western Bulldogs Leadership program in September 2019.

The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation Youth Leadership program is run over seven months with the aim to develop the leadership skills of people aged 14–16 as well as shine a light on many issues within the local community.

The program also involved camps in which all the participants were able to spend valuable time with many like-minded people from other regional areas of Victoria.

Participants must create a social justice and community-based project surrounding an issue within the Ballarat community.

Jude's project was based around cyber bullying and the effects of social media on youth.

He conducted a survey to gather a further understanding of the issue and then started an ongoing Instagram page raising awareness for the issue. Check it out at [@wbdcybersafety](https://www.instagram.com/wbdcybersafety).

His group is also in the process of organising a phone detox day at each of the three schools that members of the group will attend.



# STEM EXPO

DAMASCUS COLLEGE EVENT

On Friday 17 May, Year 9 students had the opportunity to take part in the annual STEM Expo, where they got to speed date a scientist at Damascus College.

Now in its ninth year, this event promoted careers in science, technology, allied health, medicine, engineering and maths (STEM) amongst the student body.

Members of the Ballarat community, past students and parents of Damascus College who work in the STEM area were invited back to speak and inspire students about their occupation.

Each student speed dated six to eight scientists for 10 to 15 minutes each. Students rotated amongst speakers, where they listened, talked, asked questions and completed a worksheet on their experience.

Ivanka Saric, Science Learning Area Leader, said that this event exposed students to careers in biology, engineering, chemistry, maths, environmental science, technology, physics and psychology.

"It was a great opportunity to introduce these disciplines to students in Year 9 so that they consider these subjects when heading into Year 10 and VCE," she said.

"It was also fantastic to see past students return to Damascus to speak to current students about their occupation. The passion and enthusiasm they have for their job was contagious and the students walked away with a greater understanding and appreciation for these career options."

This year we welcomed speakers who were civil and mechanical engineers, nurses, midwives, research technicians, food scientists, geologists, psychologists, renewable energy specialists, principal analysts and university students in the following fields: biomedical science, environmental engineering, engineering, psychology, optometry, science, medicine, sports engineering and biomechanics.





## 40 YEARS OF MEMORIES

### ALUMNI STORY

My time with the Sisters of Mercy was relatively short—just two years. I was previously educated in Melbourne, but due to fairly difficult family circumstances, a decision was made for me to board with the Sacred Heart nuns.

On arrival to Ballarat in 1977, I recall being immediately impressed. Even though the school had strict rules, it was less formal than I was accustomed to at my previous school. We were permitted to call the sisters by their first names—Sister Veronica, for instance. This might not sound like a big deal, but it allowed me to feel more relaxed. I had come through an unsettled time in life and the sisters and staff demonstrated boundaries, but with a particular generosity of heart that was wonderful.

Even with the strict rules, my abiding memory is their kindness.

I'd very much like to acknowledge the dedication of the staff that had not only the task of educating us but also the onerous task of keeping us corralled. There were many, many long and interminably boring weekends which gave us ample time to cook up trouble. Kudos to the staff that we all survived relatively unscathed. In hindsight, many of us consistently pushed boundaries and constantly had to be pulled into line.

Boarders formed a little clique—possibly it was the nature of living 24/7 with each other for months on end—and there was a certain comfort in the camaraderie.

So, when I recently visited Damascus, there was a mix of emotions; I hadn't set foot there for 40 years. There were so many memories, lots of spots recognised—even the exact location of my own dorm room,

where midnight feasts were common. We were a pretty inventive lot, toasting bread over the electric bar heaters or preparing feasts with an electric wok (contraband for sure).

I remember the nuns had a sense of humour. We would often wake at 7am to Slim Dusty tracks playing over the P.A.

One of my fondest memories was my wonderful Year 11 teacher, a guy named Pri. He was fantastic in his ability to connect with kids and make learning come alive. In my entire 12 years at school, he was a standout.

Fast forward to my recent visit, wow!

The Damascus school grounds have changed dramatically. Much time, effort and finances have been poured in. The facilities are much more sophisticated now and of course there's far more on offer. It's very modernised and speaks to a high standard of education.

Education has been a lynchpin for me. I went on to do medical science, moved into pathology and then onto medical technology. I've spent an entire career in this field, which has not only financed my life but provided me with a genuinely interesting professional life.

As a student, I may not have realised the value of education, but it's crucial in laying foundations for being able to navigate the world. Thank you. Thank you, to the wonderful and dedicated staff of Sacred Heart College and St Martin's in the Pines. You provided stability when my life was a little chaotic and the excellent education on hand helped me construct a very interesting and rewarding professional life.

By Anna Lethbridge, Class of 1979



# A CAMBODIAN TRIP OF A LIFETIME

MORGAN MCCANN & MILA GOSNEY

Hi. We are Year 9 student Morgan McCann and Year 7 student Mila Gosney. We spent our school holidays in Cambodia with four other teenagers and our mothers to improve the living conditions of 10 Cambodian families.

For the past two years we have been busy fundraising to reach our goal of \$20,000, which enabled us to build 10 homes through the Tabitha Foundation in Cambodia.

“After learning more about the history of this country and knowing how much they have suffered, it was incredibly rewarding to be a part of such an experience.”

We learned some amazing things whilst on this trip of a lifetime. We have learnt how grateful we should be for the things we have, no matter how small they are. It was one of the most incredible and heart-touching things, seeing the children get so excited for the things we simply take for granted every day.

By Morgan McCann, Year 9 student and Mila Gosney, Year 7 student







## ELI DEFIES THE ODDS AND PAYS IT FORWARD

ELI SPIELVOGEL

Year 7 student, Eli Spielvogel, has overcome significant adversity in his short 13-year life, and paid it forward by shaving his head to raise money for the leukaemia foundation.

Eli said that he knows first-hand what it is like to be a sick kid, so he wanted to raise money to support other sick kids like him.

“My other reason for shaving my head was that I want a child with no hair to benefit and gain confidence from receiving my hair”

Eli was born with a heart murmur, and one week post-birth he was rushed to the Royal Children's Hospital; his mum and dad, Adam and Naomi, were told that it was unlikely he would survive the trip.

Eli was diagnosed with multiple heart defects, including atrial septum and ventricular septal defects, which in layman's terms means multiple holes in his heart and a blocked aorta. His aorta was repaired at nine days old and six months later he had open heart surgery to repair the holes in his heart.

Eli's dad, Adam, said that after surgery there was no sinus rhythm so a temporary pacemaker was installed with the hope his own heartbeat would return; it did not return, so the pacemaker was made permanent.

“Given his complications he stayed in ICU for two weeks and was sent home to us on Christmas Eve,” said Adam.

“Eli spent his first Christmas going through morphine withdrawals and was sent home with a pain management schedule to wean him off it.”

At age eight, Eli's heart miraculously regained its own heartbeat, so fortunately his pacemaker was able to be removed, but he still had a leaky valve in his heart, which is to be examined by the Royal Children's Hospital every six months for the rest of his life.





From then, his life progressed normally as a young person; he went on to attend St James' Primary School and overcame some social issues, but thankfully had no health issues during this period.

"Eli will likely need medical intervention at some stage of his life. Given he has had dozens of chest x-rays there is a greater chance of him developing complications due to repeated radiation exposure from a very young age," said Adam.

After so many hospital visits, tests and surgeries at such a young age, Eli has defied the odds and is now really enjoying his first year at Damascus. His favourite subject is maths and he loves being a part of the Minecraft Club, an extra-curricular opportunity at the College.

Eli now dreams of becoming an airline pilot and currently has flying lessons, which he absolutely loves. He plans to obtain his private pilot's licence on his 15th birthday, which is the youngest day he is allowed to fly solo.

“Eli has travelled life's journey so far with numerous bumps in the road, but he has come out on the other side and has developed into a beautiful soul, where his compassion, empathy and willingness to give to others are extraordinary.”

"He has taught me to accept the giving of others, as I know how much it means to Eli to give and have his gift accepted. He is smart with his possessions and will ration his Easter eggs for the year, but will happily give away anything to see people happy. He is just that special and caring kind of kid," said Adam.



# BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST

ALUMNI & COMMUNITY EVENT

On Thursday 19 September 2019, the inaugural Bright Futures Fundraising Breakfast was held at the Ballarat Golf Club, with more than 50 guests in attendance.

Attendees included alumni from Damascus College and its three foundation schools, St. Martin's in the Pines, Sacred Heart College and St Paul's Technical College.

Special guest speaker for the event was Mary Darcy. Mary is a counselling and consulting psychologist and recently retired as the board chair for Centacare Ballarat. Mary is a valued member of the Damascus College alumni. Mary, as a Sister of Mercy, was involved in Mercy education for many years, where she spent eight years at St Martin's in the Pines in the 70s and 80s as a student counsellor/careers advisor/transition co-ordinator and boarding school supervisor.

Mary delighted the assembled crowd with her personal journey in education and shared the importance of being there for those who cannot. She encouraged those present to think about what they have and what they can do, and challenged us all to do more to help those in need.

Attendees were then treated to a sumptuous buffet breakfast and had an opportunity to enjoy the company of the people at their table and mingle with those in attendance.

Established in 2018, the Damascus College Bright Futures Scholarship sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy (John Thirst Estate), Fr Brendan Davey and Damascus College, is for the purpose of supporting students and families who are experiencing financial or personal disadvantage, and who demonstrate a strong commitment to social justice activities and contribute to their local community, but may not otherwise be able to afford a Catholic education.

In holding this fundraising breakfast, the College seeks to extend this scholarship opportunity to be able to offer it to more than one Year 7 student per year. Proceeds raised will support this worthy scholarship fund in order to extend its reach to multiple students each year.

Damascus College was extremely pleased that this inaugural event was such a success, and raised a good amount of funds towards the scholarship. It has been a great start to reaching the ultimate fundraising goal.

To find out more information about the scholarship, please go to: <https://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/prospective-scholarships>















Taylor 2016



Taylor 2019

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

### ALUMNI STORY

After graduating in 2016, without question, I took a gap year and worked, as I was keen for a break from study to travel and wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do. The following year, after a trip away, I began what I thought was going to be my quick two-year Bachelor of Entertainment Management course that would set me up, with the perk of finishing university at the same time as my friends or even before. However, I quickly came to realise the course was not for me, and finished 14 months early with a diploma instead.

It was such a daunting thing for me to leave university with the fear that I had 'wasted' another year, but I knew that that specific course was not where I wanted to be. With some free time up my sleeve and my good fortune in knowing some key people in the events sector in Ballarat, I was given many opportunities to work and network, within initiatives such as Plate Up Ballarat, The Ballarat Winter Festival and the Visit Ballarat—Made of Ballarat Pop Up Shop in Melbourne. I now work with Kate Davis and her team on Ballarat and regional food and produce focused initiatives, most specifically Eat Drink West, a network connecting regional producers from Western Victoria to chefs, hospitality and consumers alike.

This year, I have grappled with the decision to continue working or returning to study. I decided to go back to university mid-year and am currently studying a Bachelor of Health Sciences, majoring in nutrition, at Deakin University.

Over the past three years, I have had the opportunity to work in tourism, retail, hospitality, real estate, dental, food and events, as well as return to Damascus and volunteer on multiple occasions. All these experiences, primarily because of their differences, have assisted in clarifying my next step of where I want to be. In doing so, I have had the privilege of meeting and networking with some amazing people in Ballarat and surrounds.

In VCE, I did all health-based subjects and had always tossed up between studying health or business/events at university. After initially choosing events, it's funny that I have gone completely full circle, returning to study health. Now, with my Diploma in Entertainment Management and my experience in the events industry, I hope to combine this with health to create my own experience and a job title that meets my passion for food, wellbeing and creating engaging experiences for all!

I cannot thank Damascus College and the staff, who continually supported me, enough for the leadership and social justice opportunities. Their constant but subtle pushes out of my comfort zone helped me discover early on what my values were and ultimately built my overall self-confidence to live by them. The support from the College community was extremely instrumental in equipping me with the skills to deal with the uncertainty of life after school.

My biggest piece of advice to any student or young adult would be to trust your instincts and go where you know you will be happy.

One thing I have come to realise recently is that navigating life and its contents is a process. It can be hard sometimes to sit back and enjoy it when we are so focused on one specific outcome. There are going to be times where you need to do things that may not be thrilling at the time, but that is part of the process, and if you can truly walk into any situation knowing what you want, what you need and what makes you happy, the process will have purpose and will be something you can value and for which you will have a sense of gratitude.

By Tayla Munro, Class of 2016

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN



connecting@Damascus

# THE SHINING LIGHT AWARD

INSPIRING ALUMNI

The Shining Light Award will recognise alumni who have contributed significantly through their chosen field to Damascus College and our global community, and who will be an inspiration to current and future students.

Damascus College and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines, value the contributions and achievements of all its alumni.

The Shining Light Award for Inspiring Alumni was launched, to be bestowed upon two alumni biennially, to recognise alumni who have contributed significantly, through their chosen field, to Damascus College and our global community, and who will be an inspiration to current and future students.

Nominations are now open and will close Wednesday 31 March 2021, at 4pm.

Anyone can submit a nominee for The Shining Light Award, based on the following criteria:

1. The recipients must be Damascus College Alumni, living or dead. (Please note that alumni at Damascus College are defined as past students and staff of Damascus College and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines).

2. The recipients must be successful in their chosen fields, as demonstrated by positions held, achievements, qualifications, awards/prizes/scholarships and length of service.
3. The work/actions of the recipients' chosen fields support and uphold social justice and Christian values.
4. The alumni have made contributions or supported the College and global community in ways that are inspirational or motivational.
5. Categories for selection are:
  - Service to the global community
  - Science/Technology
  - Arts
  - Sport
  - Business
  - Academia
  - Faith Development

Anyone can submit a nomination for the award.

Nominations must be submitted on the nomination form located on the Damascus College website, under Past Students, and include supporting documentation and relevant evidence. The nomination form may be completed online and submitted electronically or printed and mailed in.







## SEEDS OF JUSTICE SLEEP OUT

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

More than 15 Damascus College Year 11 students and staff braved the Ballarat weather and slept out to raise money for homelessness on Friday 13 September.

Damascus College is committed to social justice and, as part of this commitment, is now in its sixth year of running the Seeds of Justice Street-Wise Sleep Out, where it raises money for the Ballarat Soup Bus and Uniting Care Ballarat.

Acting Deputy Principal Mr Tony Haintz said that the sleep out raised funds and awareness in support of those who are caught in the complex set of circumstances that leads to homelessness.

At various stages throughout the night, students were asked to move on and find other places to sleep, just as if they were homeless in the city.

“Representatives from the Ballarat Soup Bus and Uniting Church Outreach addressed the students before they embarked on their sleep out and the students watched a DVD on the streets of New York,” he said.

All students participating sought sponsors to raise money for the local homeless support agencies.

“By their engagement in community development events, students developed within themselves the virtues of compassion, unity, justice and understanding.”

As a Catholic school, Damascus College encourages an attitude of action for social justice and community service. This is put into practice in several ongoing activities at local, national and international levels as part of the College’s Christian Personal Development Award.



# MAYA MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO THOSE IN NEED

MAYA TOLLIDAY

Year 10 student Maya Tolliday has been counting down the days to her 16th birthday, as her grandfather had promised that when she turned 16 he would take her to Nepal to volunteer with Aussie Action Abroad, a community development and expedition organisation he founded before Maya was born.

Aussie Action Abroad facilitates projects to communities in need and strengthens relationships with partnering organisations, communities and volunteers.

Further information can be found at [www.aussieactionabroad.com](http://www.aussieactionabroad.com)

This year, Maya turned 16 and she said that all she has wanted to do is go overseas to volunteer, help others and make a difference.

Maya travelled to Nepal with an expedition team for 16 days where she spent time in the capital, Kathmandu, but the majority of time was spent in some remote and rural areas of Nepal, including Khudi, Lamjung and Bhulbule.

“ I travelled with my grandfather, my mum and my best friend Jaime, and we joined other Nepalese people to make up our expedition team. It was our first time overseas (except for my grandfather) so it was very exciting and scary at the same time. ”

Whilst in Kathmandu, the team taught a dance and fitness program for two days to young adults and teenagers at a fitness centre called Global Action Nepal. Maya's mum is a dance teacher, so they taught the Nepalese group the Australian style of dancing and also taught them how to teach dance, enabling them to pursue dance teaching later on in life.

In the remote villages of Nepal, the team visited local community groups that Aussie Action Abroad had worked with in the past. They met with mothers' groups that were managed and organised by women, empowering girls in Nepal.



"The women we met and shared with were beautiful and so kind. As a group, we donated over 100 hygiene packs, which are packs for girls and ladies for their hygienic requirements, and knitted garments including hats, small sweaters and headbands."

In Bhulbule, the group worked at a small primary school, Shree Surya Jyoti, with approximately 40 students; they worked with the students and staff to develop the school walls, painting over the drab grey colour and transforming the school into a colourful, fun and exciting learning environment.

"We painted each room of the school with a splash of colour, painting school charts and colourful interactive paintings such as the alphabet, solar system, and plant and body diagrams, encouraging students to come and stay at school. We also donated school resources, including books and sporting equipment."

Maya learnt so much from the trip, as every day brought something new and exciting; the most important thing she learnt was how lucky we are to live in Australia.

"It made me open my eyes and I developed a deep sense of gratitude for the things I take for granted, such as attending school, working in my community and even drinking a glass of water. I also learnt that you don't need much in life to be happy, as every person I met in Nepal was happy, caring and friendly even though most of them couldn't afford meals for the week, or didn't have a job or a family," said Maya.

This opportunity has changed Maya's life forever. She plans to return to Nepal one day as there is still so much support that is needed to improve the Nepalese way of life.

"This trip has strengthened my passion and drive to help those in need, and I would love to volunteer for other organisations to make a difference and give back to those in need around the world."

For now, Maya will concentrate on the next few years of study at Damascus College, where her favourite subjects are biology and chemistry. She hopes to one day go to university to study biomedical science, but first she wants to become a paramedic so she can help people in the community.

"I love what Damascus has to offer, not only in the classroom but around the school, and the wonderful community involvement. My time so far at Damascus has made me realise how much of a difference volunteering can make and it has instilled in me the passion to continue giving back throughout my life. I am proud to be a Damascus student, as I enjoy getting involved in the numerous opportunities on offer that help me to grow, succeed and be my best."

By Maya Tolliday, Year 10 student







## 2019 INDONESIAN IMMERSION REFLECTIONS

KIRSTEN PHYLAND

This year I was privileged to be one of the staff members who attended the Indonesian Language and Cultural Study Tour in June–July that travelled to Java and Bali.

Our group consisted of 25 people: 21 fantastic students from Years 10–12 and four staff members (Brendan Bawden, Ann Bawden, Jason Harrison and myself). It was a wonderful mix of people, with each bringing different perspectives and travel experiences to the group; it was a lot of fun to be a part of.

I have travelled quite a bit overseas before this trip, including the Timor-Leste Immersion in 2015 and a 12-month exchange in Canada during 2017. I was particularly looking forward to this trip, as I studied Indonesian when I was in high school and our language and cultural tour was cancelled due to the 1999 social unrest in Jakarta. Finally, after 20 years, I got the chance to participate!

Brendan put together an amazing itinerary for the 12 days, with a great variety of activities and locations that gave the group a taste of life in Indonesia. We started in Jakarta, where we were hosted by the

wonderful Niknik and her staff at Kampung Bloombank (language school). Here we were involved in language lessons and cultural activities such as mask painting, puppet making, singing, dancing and traditional games—we even had our own Indonesian restaurant set up for us one night.

While in Jakarta we visited some tourist sites before flying to Yogyakarta where we were greeted by our tour guide—Darwin, the master of travel games! Darwin showed us many spectacular sights around the region, including Borobudur, a ninth-century Buddhist temple; Mt Merapi, an active volcano that last erupted in 2010; and the Pindul Caves, through which we floated on tyre tubes. We also visited a local village where we ate a traditional meal, planted rice, played in a gamelan orchestra and attempted our own batik art.

While in Yogyakarta we stayed in accommodation on Malioboro St, which was a truly eye-opening experience. I don't think I have seen so many people on one shopping strip, and it's fair to say our small group definitely stood out amongst the crowd! From Yogya, we made our way to Sanur in Bali for the final part of our tour and a bit of a slower pace.



Here we saw the bargaining start in earnest and many triumphant faces returned to our accommodation with their new purchases.

We also attended the Barong and Kris dance in Sanur and the Kecak dance in Uluwatu, overlooking the beautiful clifftops at sunset, which was a spectacular setting. A highlight for our time in Bali was our visit to SMPN 2 Kuta Selatan (junior high school), where the group were able to meet their pen pals and participate in a variety of activities such as sport, fruit carving and Sanskrit writing.

I have brought back many great memories from the tour, including the 'Guess how long this bus trip will take' game, riding in the Jeeps around Mt Merapi, coming adrift in the cave tubing group and watching the Year 10 girls' impressive bargaining skills—new Mimco anyone?

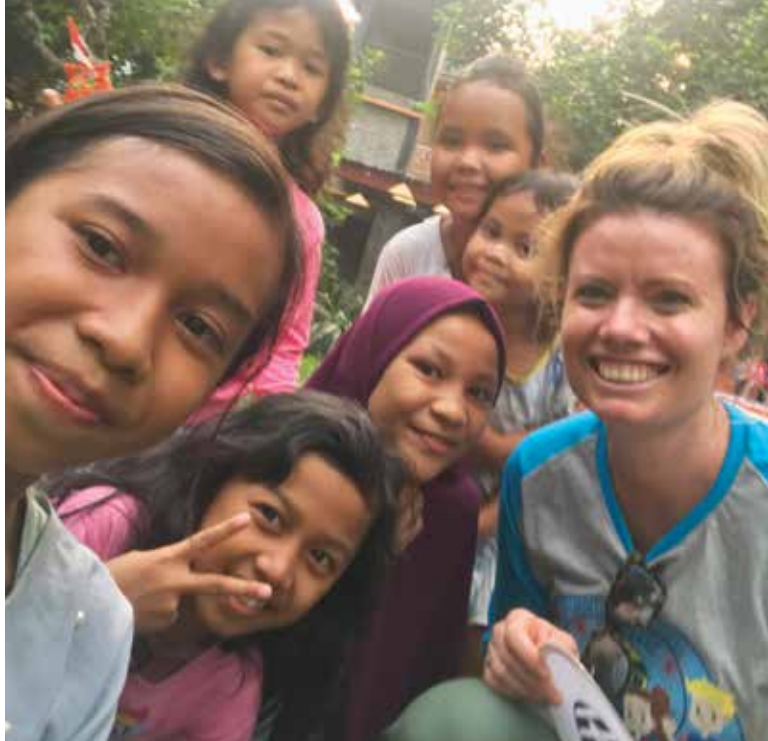
However, the fondest memory I have brought back with me is the people of Indonesia we shared our experience with. The generosity shown to us by our friends at Bloombank was exceptional; they brought such fun and energy to all the activities that had been organised for us. They were so incredibly welcoming and it was amazing to watch the friendships develop between our students and their young people.

Our departure saw warm farewells, contact details exchanged and even a few tears. We saw a similar instant connection between our students and their pen pals, with the language barrier presenting no issue in everyone getting involved and enjoying their time together.

We were extremely proud of how our Damascus students embraced the opportunity to practise their language skills and involve themselves in all of the activities encountered along the way. From fishing to dancing to riding water buffaloes, there was nothing our students said 'No' to! They were a wonderful group of young people to share this experience with and I think they will look back on this trip as one of the highlights of their time at Damascus College.

My advice for anyone considering applying for the Indonesian Language and Study Tour is do it! It's a wonderful opportunity to not only extend your language skills and cultural understanding, but to also meet some wonderful people and be a part of a unique experience.

By Kirsten Phyland, Health & Human Development & Science Teacher





# 2019 INDONESIAN IMMERSION REFLECTIONS

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JUDE SKEWES-CLINTON

We arrived at the airport full of nerves and ready for an adventure of a lifetime. There was a mixture of emotions running through everyone's head: excitement, anticipation and the occasional feeling of disbelief.

We spent our time in the language school of Bloombank, where as well as developing our knowledge of the culture and language of the country, we were also able to practise our language skills in real-life situations with the young children of the area. Over these few days I made quite strong connections with these children and I know many others in the group did as well. Upon leaving the Bloombank area we were all told that we were welcome back any time and it almost felt as if we were leaving a second family behind.

Our next stop was Yogyakarta, where we spent our time seeing some of the amazing historic and geographic sites that this area has to offer. We also visited a wildlife sanctuary for endangered animals; although quite confronting, this experience was most worthwhile and showed us all a part of the country that not everyone can experience.

Our final stop of the trip was Bali. Here the diversity of this country is visible. The differences from the island of Java to the island of Bali can be seen and the experiences over the next few days would also show this. From the traditional dances of the people to the quite stressful experience of shopping in the market, everything was something new and different to the previous areas. One major highlight of this time was visiting one of the schools in the area and meeting our pen pals.

After 12 days in this amazing country it was time to go, with everyone feeling thankful, yet exhausted from the difference in food and culture to the simple difference in our population. This was an experience I will never forget, and I will always cherish the memories.

By Jude Skewes Clinton, Year 11 student





# 2019 INDONESIAN IMMERSION REFLECTIONS

GEORGIA NEWMAN

As we had been waiting for this trip for 10 months, there was a surreal feeling amongst the group and it only started to feel real as we boarded the first of many planes for our journey.

Our adventure started off in Jakarta and we soon realised that we were no longer in Australia from the heat alone. It was humid and sticky and hot, and we would just have to get used to it.

Completing cultural and language lessons at the Bloombank language school was a favourite for many on the trip. At night it was a lot of fun, as we would return to Bloombank and we would sing and dance with the local children.

We visited Jogjakarta, where we got to plant rice, ride buffalo and play traditional Indonesian instruments called Gamelan, as well as make our own Batik (died cloth). One of the highlights from Jogjakarta was the Jeep tour of Mt Merapi, a massive, highly active volcano.

Our final stay was in Bali, where we witnessed two traditional Balinese dances, baffled as to how these people could leap around a stone stage whilst wearing elaborate costumes and yelling, all in bare feet!

After six months of writing, I was so excited to finally meet my pen pal at the Uluwatu School, and he seemed very excited to meet me. It was an amazing experience and many of us will remain in contact with our pen pals in the future.

After a wonderful and remarkable trip, we all found ourselves reluctantly boarding our plane back to Australia. We were definitely all exhausted but happy. It was a trip we will never forget.

By Georgia Newman, Year 10 student







Kim Anderson, inaugural winner of the Damascus College Art Project

# 2021 ALUMNI ART PROJECT SUBMISSIONS

NOW OPEN

Expressions of interest are now invited for the 2021 Alumni Art Project.

The Alumni Art Project seeks to engage Damascus College Alumni (including past students or staff from Sacred Heart College, St Paul's College and St Martin's in the Pines) in the life and community of Damascus College, through producing a piece of art that explores the school's motto, 'To Live By the Light of Christ'.

Launched in 2014, the College has engaged the services of an alumni each year to create a piece of artwork to be displayed in the Visitor Reception area of the College for a 12-month period. At the end of the initial 12-month period, the College will retain the artwork for display or storage in another location within the College.

Damascus College will pay a fee to the artist who has been commissioned to undertake the work.

The artist is chosen from a selection of nominations, by the College Leadership Team. If you would like to be considered for this project, please send an email or letter, including samples (pictures) of your work to:

Korina Hegert  
Alumni & Development Officer  
1412 Geelong Road  
Mi Clear VIC 3350  
k.hegert@damascus.vic.edu.au



Artist Peter Thomas works on his sculptural piece.

The deadline for your 2021 Alumni Art Project submission of interest is Monday 1 June, 2020.

The artist will be chosen and notified in August, with the art piece and artist's statement to be delivered to the College by mid-November.

The 2020 Alumni Art Project piece will be displayed in the Visitor Reception of the Mercy Admin Wing in January 2020., and will remain on display throughout the year.

Alumni at Damascus College are defined as past students and staff of Damascus College and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines.



Artist Amelia Johnson with her piece on display at Damascus College



**connecting@Damascus**





Belinda 1991



Belinda 2019

## LINKING HOSPITALITY STAFF TO JOBS

### ALUMNI STORY

Hello, I'm Belinda Eden (Kendrick) and I was a student at Sacred Heart College from 1991 to 1994. I was part of the amalgamation of Sacred Heart College, St Paul's College and St Martin's of the Pines, which we now know as Damascus College.

I am the youngest of five children and the only child born in Ballarat. I have two brothers and two sisters who also studied at St Martin's, St Paul's and Sacred Heart College. Reflecting back on my time at Sacred Heart College, it did help shape me into who I am as a person now, even if at the time I didn't realise it.

I am also a parent at Damascus College, with Amalee in Year 10 and Declan in Year 7. It's amazing to come across teachers from Sacred Heart who taught me, who now are teaching my children. It's a real flashback. My husband and I enjoy watching Amalee and Declan grow and become part of the school community, with both being part of school productions and choir.

One teacher who I remember fondly was Ron Matthews. Ron was the teacher who, for me, looked after work experience and guiding students with their careers. I was not the academic type and struggled in most subjects, but I remember a conversation with Mr Matthews about what direction to go in life. Ron supported and guided me even into adulthood with his kind words.

I have always had big ideas. I have never been afraid to try something different and random. Sometimes I have found success and other times, not so. But I always give it a go. So, in February this year, I launched a new business that connects hospitality businesses with travelling jobseekers. Troop Employment is designed similar to how you look for accommodation with Airbnb, using an online portal where businesses

can connect with qualified staff by using a filter system. I have designed a new way that people can employ staff and I am currently working on the prototype. However, until this is been completed, I am connecting businesses with jobseekers across regional Victoria using a manual system.

People often ask me why I came up with this idea. I worked in a sporting club for three years and, during this time, we hosted many events. Sometimes we had enough staff, other times we didn't, and our resources were limited. I didn't know where we could find staff for one-off events. After researching and discovery, there were many companies that did, but they are all based in the Melbourne CBD, and if you hired staff, there was a huge price added for travel.

This was not something viable for any business, let alone ones across regional Victoria. I wanted somewhere you could go to find staff that are only looking for short-term opportunities due to travelling, or who are limited in availability due to personal circumstances or wanting to find more work due to a saving goal.

Together with Troop Employment, I am in partnership with the GROW program, looking at ways to engage with students who are studying hospitality in the VET program. If only the VET option had been around when I was younger—I may have stayed in school longer. It's such a great opportunity for students.

Hospitality is no longer seen as a stepping stone in your employment timeline, it is now a career that can take you all over the world.

By Belinda Eden, Class of 1996



## CLASS OF 1969

### 50 YEAR REUNION

The Class of 1969 celebrated their 50-year reunion with a special event on Sunday 24 March 2019. Guests arrived at the Damascus College campus, formerly St Martin's in the Pines, at 11 am and after a quick mingle and registration where they received special flower corsages they were led on a guided tour of the campus.

The assembled crowd of ladies enjoyed seeing the same spaces that they had used as students back in 1968 and 1969 when they attended St Martin's in the Pines and how it has evolved. They pointed out where the dining room was for boarders, now the St Martin's Resource Centre, and where they practised marching, a favoured sporting activity for them as students.

Fifty students and staff from the Class of 1969 were in attendance, with some travelling from Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales to be part of the festivities.

After enjoying a walk around the campus, the Class of 1969 were led to the undercroft, a space they all remembered fondly, for a delicious sit-down catered lunch. The College had transformed the space into an elegant dining room with white linen tablecloths, fresh flowers and full table service. An open bar ensured the guests did not go thirsty and they

toasted each other with champagne and celebrated returning to "St Mick's" after 50 years.

Honoured guests at this special luncheon included Veronica Lawson RSM, Therese Powers RSM and Cecilia Bowman.

Instrumental in ensuring the success of this reunion were past students Anne O'Brien and Bernice O'Toole, who acknowledge the support and assistance they received from many of the ladies of their cohort.

In attendance were Gayle Aiello, Diane Alexander, Clare Banks, Ann Barfoot, Josephine Biggs, Faye Burton, Marian Corbett, Georgia Dacakis, Colene Delaney, Shanthie De Mel, Jennifer Deveny, Bernadette Franc, Barbara Gallagher, Marlene Grace, Heather Hamilton, Anne Johnston, Maria Jones, Glenda Lunnan, Pranom Mackenzie, Christine Mcgrath, Maureen Mcnamara, Monica Mugavin, Nary Munro, Helen Nolen RSM, Pauline Nunan, Anne O'Brien, Therese O'loughlin, Shonagh O'shannessy, Bernice O'Toole, Carol Parsons, Annita Politanski, Joanne Reidy, Alison Roache, Anne Ryan, Janny Ryan, Sharyn Kaye Smith, Maureen Thistlethwaite and Genevieve Watts.





## CLASS OF 1979

### 40 YEAR REUNION

On Saturday 23 March 2019 a group of women from the Class of 1979 met at Damascus College for their 40-year reunion. Joining the ladies from 1979 were Veronica Lawson RSM, principal of St Martin's at the time, and retired teacher Gordon Shaw. The high energy and loud laughter belied the fact that only seven members of that cohort were in attendance. Within an hour they had decided that they wouldn't let their 40-year reunion pass without attempting to contact more from their group and so decided to have a "re-do".

The organising group (as they were now known) met over the next several months. Organising their reunion became a wonderful excuse to rekindle old friendships, strengthen bonds and enjoy each other's company.

Led by Maree Duffy (nee Macklin), the organising group were able to make contact with over 30 women from their class. It was a wonderful blend of women who had not been back to the boarding house on Geelong Road since graduation in 1979; day scholars who rode the bus in from Dunnstown, Wallace and Gordon; and the city girls who cycled onto campus.

The Class of 1979 reunion on Saturday 12 October 2019 began with a celebration at Damascus College. It was an exciting visit for these past students as they were able to see the newly completed science and music rooms. One attendee remembered being a boarder in 1978 and '79 and having to travel into Ballarat for piano lessons. She was especially impressed by the fabulous amenities now available to Damascus students. After finishing the tour, the group headed off to the City Oval to continue the festivities.

In attendance were Sandra Mullane (nee Leonard), Maree Howlett (nee O'Donohue), Loretta Simmonds (nee Preece), Jacinta Kerwan (nee Kennedy), Maree Duffy (nee Macklin), Janet Jackson (nee Preece), Teresa English (nee Jess), Rita Cousens (nee Fuller), Elaine Djordjevic (nee O'Keefe), Jenny Maney (nee Dower), Julianne Allen (nee Hood), Lou Gleeson (nee O'Halloran), Leanne Taylor (nee Browning), Denise Wilkie (nee Anderson), Loretta O'Farrell (nee Rix), Kerri Skinner (nee Murphy), Sharyn Sonneman (nee Creati), Kathy Taylor (nee Gilbert), Jacinta Westbrook (nee Ross), Penny Sherritt, Sally Morris (nee Quanchi), Kerryn Pike (nee White), Jane Grant and Margaret Chubb (nee Cook).





## CLASS OF 1989

### 30 YEAR REUNION

The 30-year reunion for the Class of 1989 kicked off with a welcome reception held at Damascus College on Saturday 16 March 2019.

A large crowd of 50 past students, day scholars and boarders were joined by partners and children as they returned to the campus. It was a joyful celebration as members of the cohort who had not been back in 30 years found old friends and made new ones. Past staff members Donnie Davidson and Gordon Shaw were in attendance to help the group celebrate their reunion.

The Ballarat weather turned on a beautiful sunny day; festivities were held outside so that attendees could enjoy the glorious March day.

The attendees were led on guided tours of the College by current staff members, who were excited to show off the extensive building projects and developments that had taken place on campus since 1989. The original buildings still make up the 'bones' of the campus, with the new only adding to the state-of-the-art and still very modern campus nestled in 50 acres of natural bushland.

The class of 1989 reunion continued its celebration long into the night at the Western Hotel. Special thanks from the group to Kate Sparkman for the work she did to organise the after party at this venue.

In attendance were Kristine Allan, Kerryn Azzopardi, Rebecca Ballantyne, Kerryn Boyko, Jacqui Brooks, Julie Byrne, Diana Carli-Seebohm, Matt Carter, Bridget Clancy, Paul Conroy, Grant Creati, Damian Curran, Janelle Farrelly, Damien Forbes, Tina Ford-Doe, Justin Hanrahan, Theresa Huska, Rodney James, Camille Lewis, Jacinta Lewis, Tim Lynch, Judy McBain, Jacinta McLennan, Kylie McShanag, Sandy Morgan, Helen Morris, Bradley Morvell, Elise Murphy, Sass Murphy, Siobhan O'Brien, Sally O'farrell, Chris Orchard, Clarissa Pittock, Kate Ryan, Christina Shillington, Kate Sparkman, Jack Steenhuis, Amanda Taylor, Sharon Taylor, Darren Tudor, Pauline Watt, Kylie Weyers and Magda Williams.





## CLASS OF 1999

### 20 YEAR REUNION

The Class of 1999 celebrated their 20-year reunion on Friday 15 March, when a group of more than 20 past students came together at Damascus College, many of them for the first time in 20 years.

The welcome reception was hosted by Damascus College and was an opportunity for the past students to come together, reconnect, and enjoy a drink and nibble on some food, to reminisce and look at old pictures and yearbooks from the archives.

The Class of 1999 enjoyed catching up with past staff member Gordon Shaw. In addition to teaching many of those in attendance while they were students at Damascus, Gordon was in attendance to take a group picture.

Patrick Dillon, a current staff member from the Class of 1999, led the assembled group on a tour of the College, showing off new amenities like the John Shannon Centre, the new chapel and the Mercy Wing administrative building. Attendees also learned of the planned improvements to the science building and music rooms.

After leaving the College, many from the 20-year reunion group went on to an after party at the Freight Bar.

In attendance were Clair Berry, Lauren Bourke, Laura Clark, Patrick Dillon, Amy Gillett, Sarah Gleeson, Jessica Godfrey-Roberts, Tracey Lorensene, Joseph McKay, Bree McKenzie, Natasha Nicholson, Julie Read, Ange Staley, Carli Stevens, Edward Tennant, Matthew Vanderveer, Rebecca Warr and Andrew White.



## CLASS OF 2009

### 10 YEAR REUNION

On Friday 22 March the Class of 2009 met at Damascus College to enjoy their 10-year class reunion. The class was welcomed to the College by Principal Matthew Byrne, who was also celebrating 10 years of service at Damascus College.

The returning Class of 2009 were thrilled to be joined for their celebration by the familiar faces of past staff members Gordon Shaw and current staff members Erin Marshall, Daniel Jans, Tony Haintz and, of course, Matthew Byrne.

The reunion group met out in the courtyard in front of the Valda Ward Auditorium, where they enjoyed drinks and nibbles before taking part in a group picture and then being led on a campus tour. Attendees were excited to tour the campus to see familiar spaces like the "Audi" and "undercroft", and were impressed with the new additions to the campus.

The cohort of over 50 past students enjoyed their time at Damascus College before continuing the festivities at The Freight Bar.

In attendance were past students Emma Armstrong, Jonnie Arnel, Andrew Bradshaw, Aaron Brown, Alena Burton, Anna Carey, Richard Daykin, Philippa Dodd, Jack Donne, Kate Furness, Grace Goyne, Zach Graham, Sarah Grawich, Fagyn Gwyther-McCuskey, Nick Haintz, Jason Homberg, Callum Hosking, Charlee Kitchin, Sharayah Lansdown, Jessica Lee, Jamie-Lee Lobbe, Fran Marsden, Tessa Marshall, Jane Martib, Caitlin Mauric, Amy McFarlane, Benjamin Naus, Jess Nunquam, Emma Ostrom, James Park, Jason Plover, Andrew Pryor, Joel Ridsdale, Daniel Romeo, Jazmine Rowe, Nicholas Stephan, Samara Svanosio, Bryce Trigg, Matt Willis, Jacob Wood and Daniel Yates.



# YOU'RE INVITED

UPCOMING ALUMNI EVENT

## 2020 REUNION DATES

Past students and staff of Damascus and its foundation colleges, Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines, it's almost time to celebrate your 2020 reunion

### CLASS REUNIONS

50 Year – Class of 1970	Sunday 19 April, 11.30am – 3pm
40 Year – Class of 1980	Saturday 18 April, 2-4pm
30 Year – Class of 1990	Saturday 21 March, 2-4pm
20 Year – Class of 2000	Sunday 3rd May, 2-4pm
10 Year – Class of 2010	Friday 20 March, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

### SPECIAL REUNIONS FOR 2020

60 Year – Class of 1960	Saturday 2 May
St Paul's All School Reunion	Saturday 10 October, 2-4pm
Timor-Leste Reunion	TBA Date

Visit [damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-reunions-events](http://damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-reunions-events)  
Please update/provide your contact information  
and get all of your 2020 class reunion details



**connecting@Damascus**





## TONY PURCELL'S EULOGY

IN MEMORIAM

I first met Tony the year I arrived at St Martin's in 1989, one year after him, and as staff we often shared an office, along with Shahrkh and others.

Many students sought to be in his classes. I suspect that his retirement was even delayed by groups of students in Year 11 begging him to stay just one more year so that they could be in his Year 12 class.

Tony was an enthusiastic, passionate teacher, and was himself always learning, always reading. When he became interested in psychology he studied at Swinburne University and, along with John Brick, developed a course that quickly attracted students. Students recognised Tony's genuine interest and his own engagement drew students to the classes. There are, no doubt, many students who have gone on to universities to study psych or history or become teachers, thanks to Tony. Tony's association with Ballarat Uni meant he also shared his love of teaching and learning with the dip ed students there. His influence continued.

I think everyone here would know that Tony was a great storyteller. His stories improved with age. He always embellished stories, making them better. Over the years, Shahrkh and I did hear quite a few versions ourselves. We definitely knew he had once worked at De La Salle. There was even one occasion when Shahrkh pulled him up as he had appropriated one of her stories—adding some Tony touches, of course. The stories made the learning memorable, as I'm sure his students would confirm.

Tony was a genuine and caring teacher, considerate and supportive. He enjoyed teaching and liked being with young people. He worked

well with them all but had a soft spot for students who had some personal troubles or difficult experiences. There were many recesses and lunchtimes when students would come into our staffroom and he would exchange good humoured banter with them, and sometimes tough love, always encouraging them to find the best in themselves, encouraging them—through his own expectations of them—to rise to the occasion and complete the tasks he set them to a good standard. Students felt comfortable with him. They respected and liked him. They knew the door was always open and everyone who shared a staffroom with him had to adapt to the student visits.

Tony championed students, but he was also a mentor to colleagues. As a union rep he was fearless. While he respected authority and leadership, he was not afraid to speak out when he felt it was required. He had a strong sense of justice and fairness where workers were concerned and showed courage when a confrontation was necessary. He was a caring colleague, helping those of us in need. Warm, kind and loyal. A friend to many.

On a personal note, I have fond memories of excursions we shared, taking classes to Melbourne. Often, the excursions reflected Tony's strong beliefs in social justice. As well as encouraging students to broaden their understanding of the world beyond Ballarat, Tony would challenge them to become more independent and responsible. We would take them to the leafy Eastern suburbs, to Footscray, to the Immigration Museum, to sit in the Botanic Gardens to see a Shakespeare play. To see things for themselves. And students generally responded to our expectations, though we did have some challenges. But no one messed with Tony too often. He could be formidable.





He had a special voice too, speaking quietly in class. He sometimes applied that voice in staff meetings. In English meetings we'd think we were finished and then there would be a quiet voice, 'Let me just be the devil's advocate here ...' and we'd know that we had missed something and would be there for another half hour. He could be contrary.

A measure of a teacher is also how happy an ex-student is to see that teacher. Tony often ran into his students and I have heard enough stories to know that many were delighted to see him in Bunnings or down the street in Ballarat, wanting to tell him what they were studying or doing.

To conclude, Tony was a gifted teacher, a masterful storyteller, an independent thinker. He had a distinctive, highly individual style. Once when I bailed up a student who was a fan of Tony's and I asked him what subject he had next, Was it Psych? he replied, "Fran, it's not psych or English—it's Purcell, I'm going to Purcell to listen to stories." That was how he saw him.

We will miss you, Tony.

He will be greatly missed but we have our own stories of him.

Prepared by friend and colleague Francis Watt, Teacher St Martin's in the Pines and Damascus College 1989–2010

### **Death Is Nothing At All By Henry Scott-Holland**

Death is nothing at all.

It does not count.

I have only slipped away into the next room.

Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.

I am I, and you are you,

and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.

Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.

Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.

Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.

Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.

Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.

It is the same as it ever was.

There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you, for an interval,

somewhere very near,

just round the corner.

All is well.

Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.

One brief moment and all will be as it was before.

How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

Read by Tony's daughter Anne at the conclusion of the funeral service.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & IN MEMORY

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Claire Karslake (nee Jones)**, Class of 2007, and husband Richard welcomed Harry Dicko Jones on 24 July 2019. Harry is their first child after a long IVF journey.

Past students **Tristan Wilson**, Class of 2004, and **Amy Crawley**, Class of 2006, were married in Ballarat in January 2019.

**Ange Jones**, Class of 1989, joined the Catholic Education Office Ballarat as the Assistant Director People and Development on 19 August. As a member of the executive team, the focus of her role is to provide strategic leadership across the domains of human resources, leadership development and safeguarding practices in support of the 64 Catholic schools, primary and secondary, across the Ballarat Diocese.

**Jason Kelly**, Class of 1991, as a PhD candidate, led his team from the Ballarat Fiona Elsey Cancer Research Institute in finding that a set of immune cells could turn rogue over time to both stimulate the growth of bowel cancer cells and prevent other anti-cancer cells from doing their job.

**Geoff Martin**, Class of 1996, takes on the role of musical director for the BLOC Music Theatre's 2020 production of Mamma Mia.

**Ann Jones**, Class of 2000, presents a programme called "On Track" for ABC Radio National and has recently developed a children's

segment called "Noisy by Nature". Noisy by Nature is available on Radio National and on the ABC listen app, in the Family Health and Education section. Congratulations Ann, you sound fantastic!

**Lucy McNeil**, Class of 2006, was showcased in the September issue of Rush, the Sovereign Hill magazine. As the interpretive programs officer for Sovereign Hill, Lucy has a variety of responsibilities.

**Tessa Marshall**, Class of 2009, took to the stage earlier this year with a role in the Creswick Theatre Company's production of The Lamington Man. She also performed her one-woman show A Tribute to Female Singers over the Past 90 Years in August 2019.

**Natalya Munro**, Class of 2017, is stepping up to the role of choreographer for the BLOC Music Theatre's 2020 production of Mamma Mia.

**Ruby Hyatt**, Class of 2018, enjoyed her first solo art exhibition 'Woman in Greek Mythology and History' in July at the Ballarat Unicorn Lane Gallery.

**John Bylsma**, died in October. He was a generous and humble contributor to the building up of St Paul's College; he provided practical and in-kind support to the many projects that were undertaken by the parent and staff team. He is remembered fondly by former staff and students.

Richard, Claire and Harry



Lucy McNeil, 2006



Natalya Munro, 2017







*You're invited*

## BRIGHT FUTURES FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST

UPCOMING ALUMNI & COMMUNITY EVENT

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE

Thursday 12 March, 2020

7am - 8.45am

Special Guest Speaker for this event is

**Judy Brewer AO**

In 2013, Judy was a recipient of the Asia Pacific Autism Award and, in 2016, was named Officer of the Order of Australia for her service to people with a disability, particularly to those on the autism spectrum, refugees living in rural areas, women and education. In 2017 she became Pro-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University.

Judy has held various appointments on Federal and State Government Committees, including as Chair of the National Family Carers Voice, panel member for the 2004 Review of the Disability Carer Allowance, the 2005 Ministerial Advisory Group on the reforms to Disability Trusts, the Victorian Government Autism State Plan Working Party 2007/08 and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Advisory Committee for the Positive Partnerships program.

Before this, Judy worked in tertiary education and political research for many years with both State and Federal Parliamentarians. She has been a Board member or Chair of numerous organisations, including philanthropic foundations. Judy lives on a farm in north east Victoria and is the owner/manager of Grossotto Poll Herefords.

Please visit for more details and to book your ticket

[damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-reunions-events](https://damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-reunions-events)



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