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# The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

AUTUMN 2016

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## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MATTHEW BYRNE

Welcome to this first edition of The Road for 2016.

The academic year has commenced with a student population of 1051 young men and women and 135 staff. Within our student population we have welcomed 205 Year 7 students through to 130 Year 12's who will complete their secondary educational journey with us this year. The staff team has welcomed 13 new colleagues and the College serves 804 families on a daily basis in the provision of quality Catholic secondary education in Ballarat.

Our theme this year; "God's mercy endures forever" from Psalm 136 captures Pope Francis' International Year of Mercy from a biblical perspective and Sr Veronica Lawson, as our guide, has challenged us all to seek and be Mercy in new and different ways in the world. This year, as a College founded in the spirit of Mercy, that is, the tradition of Catherine McAuley and of the lay and religious people of the Diocese of Ballarat, we continue to help young people and their families understand what it means to "Live by the Light of Christ." In the next story of this publication you will read about how Damascus College is taking part in the Mercy International Reflection Process, as we continue to celebrate this core element of our identity.

In 2016 there are many exciting things taking place across the College. The College Board is currently finalising the next phase of our strategic directions which will guide our development through to 2020. This year sees the commencement of a new cycle of leadership positions and we look forward to the contribution of these individuals to the growth of our College. There continues to be significant work relating to our core business of improved learning outcomes for students and enhanced professional practice for teachers and support staff. The next stage of the roll out of personal devices to students to enhance their learning has also taken place. Many of the initiatives that have been outlined here,



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## A JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY AT DAMASCUS COLLEGE

In April 2015 Pope Francis announced the *Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*, beginning on 08 December 2015 and ending on November 20, 2016, saying "the whole Church will find in this Jubilee the joy needed to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God, with which all of us are called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time."

In June of the same year Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment and human ecology, *Laudato Si'*, became the first encyclical to focus specifically on creation and human relationship with it. It proclaims the Gospel of creation, the writing of "God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance."

At Damascus College these bold moves form the background to our evangelisation processes for this year. We have chosen as our 2016 theme the responsory from Psalm 136: God's mercy endures forever and we have accepted the invitation of the sister of Mercy to become engaged in the Mercy International Reflection process. The process invites our community to consider the ways in which the environment, our planet and its human and other-than-human inhabitants are truly in need of mercy. The process is one of discernment, which is a method of coming to a decision that is not taken lightly.

There will be attention to the detail of our suffering planet and its creatures, seeking to understand the implications of our shared plight and making a wise judgement about the possibilities, before deciding on a community action that is liberating, sustainable and unwavering. This involves a series of gatherings and data collection strategies that will impact firstly on teachers and staff members, then on students and their families.

Past principal of St Martin's in the Pines and former College Governor, Sr. Veronica Lawson RSM, is our mentor in this process. As the year progresses, the invitation will become stronger and the need for reflection that leads to action, more intense. In mercy, we are called to an integrity that sees, judges and acts. We are called to a compassion that is a being with the other in their moment of need. May we become the Mercy that we profess?

build on the work of previous years and all are intended to support contemporary learning at Damascus to equip young men and women for the future.

It has been a frantic start to the year, with an early Easter and holiday break. Our rowers were wonderful in the Head of the Lake regatta with our junior girls winning all four divisions. Students also took out four rowing and three after school sport premierships within the BAS competition this term. We invited back 2015 graduates who achieved study scores in the 40's to our opening assembly and 2015 dux, Sophie Anstis who achieved a study score of 97.25 addressed the student population. Equally, many young people moved off into trades and the employment of their choice at the completion of last year and we celebrate their achievements too. We have had House Swimming and Lap of the Lake carnivals and students have commenced rehearsals for the production of *Grease* that will take place early in Term 3. The Energy Breakthrough team were highly competitive in a Wonthaggi 24 hour race and our senior French students headed to Switzerland and France for three weeks. These are but a few of the events of a hectic eight week term.

I hope that former members of the Damascus, St Martin's, Sacred Heart and St Paul's communities tap into our expanded Alumni opportunities supported by new staff member Korina Hegert, who is building on Yvette Nesire-McNeil's wonderful contribution to the College. More information on how to connect can be found on the back cover of this publication.

In working with students this year we have been trying to assist them to see that God's enduring mercy, God's love in the world, is expressed through each one of them. They are the people who will make the changes that this planet needs, they will help those in need and be the love of God in the world. It is a privilege to work in a school and have the opportunity to touch the future.

## COMMEMORATIVE PICTURE OF CATHERINE MCAULEY

To commemorate the Jubilee Year of Mercy, in December 2015, the South B Community, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea gifted to the College a photo of a Venerable Catherine McAuley statue, located in the grounds of the Institute Centre in Stanmore, NSW.

This photo has since been framed and hung in the Catherine McAuley Wing of the College for all of the Damascus community to appreciate and contemplate. The following is adorned on a plaque beside the framed picture:

Venerable Catherine McAuley, 1778 – 1841, Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy

Catherine McAuley is immortalised in a bronze statue located in the grounds of the Institute Centre in Stanmore, NSW.

This picture was gifted from South B Community, Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, to commemorate the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: 13/12/2015 to 26/11/2016.

Catherine McAuley led a life of great generosity, spent in serving others; she had given her wealth to provide for others' welfare, to lessen suffering and provide for the poor, while herself enduring much misunderstanding, many trials and hardships.

Catherine was acknowledged as a woman of God - one who simply followed the voice of Christ in relieving suffering and injustices around her. She tried to fill the needs of the people crying out for spiritual and material assistance, for love, justice and knowledge.



## 20TH ANNIVERSARY SPOTTED GUMS PLAQUE OPENING

In 2015 we celebrated the 20th anniversary of Damascus College.

As part of these celebrations we planted 20th anniversary spotted gums in March 2015, at the entry to the College and on Wednesday 9th December 2015 we officially opened the gums as well as the commemorative rock and plaque listing the numerous sponsors.

It was delightful to see numerous members of the Damascus community, staff and students in attendance to celebrate this momentous occasion.



## 2016 SCHOOL CAPTAINS

### KAINE BURGESS

My name is Kaine Burgess and I am School Captain of 2016. The honour of being selected by my peers and teachers was a gratifying achievement for me.

The role of school captain is a significant one and I am proud to be a part of the tradition of the school, where I will strive to make Damascus a place where students are able to step out of their comfort zone to have new experiences in their learning endeavours.

This year I am looking forward to continuing to make new friendships, growing as a person, developing my strengths and working on my weaknesses, and I am looking forward to the unknown pathway of my future after Year 12. My brother and sister attended Damascus College and have both gone on to succeed in their work and life and have continued friendships that were developed through their time at Damascus.

Although I started Year 7 in 2011, my family has been a part of the Damascus community since 2003. My favourite memories of Damascus started from the beginning in the making of new friendships, attending all of the camps, travelling to Indonesia and receiving Achievement Awards. I have a part-time job working at McDonalds, which has helped me to develop my leadership skills, time-management and the ability to save money.

Indonesian is my favourite subject at Damascus, as not only has it helped develop my language skills, but it has also helped broaden my horizons by seeking future travel and wanting to experience different cultures around the world. Listening to music and watching movies is my relaxation and I like to spend quality time with family and friends. My hopes and aspirations after finishing Year 12 are to either have a gap year or go straight into studying Science at University.

Damascus is a truly great school as it is a place where students are able to learn and interact with each other and have success in subjects that they are passionate about. If I had any advice to give to any Year 7 starting school at Damascus it is not to worry if you have difficulty making new friends or finding your place within the school, as we all grow and become individuals in the end. You will have a wide range of people that will be in your life forever and you will find the confidence to try new things, as I have found. I hope that this is a year full of hard work and dedication by all students at Damascus and a time that we as Year 12 students, will remember forever.



### CHIARA ANGELI

My name is Chiara Angeli, and alongside Kaine, I was elected School Captain for Damascus in 2016.

School captaincy has always been a dream of mine, since all the way back in Grade 6.

I am so honoured and excited to have been chosen as School Captain and cannot wait for this year and all the challenges and extraordinary experiences that will come with it.

As School Captain, I hope to represent my year level and my school to the best that I can, and get to know all the people around me, students, peers and staff, in order to be able to represent every individual justly.

Year 12, as already proved by the incredible retreat we started the year off with, is bound to be a very exciting and fun year. I am looking forward to all the lasts we will experience as a year level, the last swimming sports, the last Damascus Day and our last formal as well as everything else, which will all be our best as well as our last.

I was born and lived in Melbourne until the end of Year 7, when we decided to make the move to Ballarat. I chose Damascus to start Year 8 as I really liked the friendly and caring feel of the school, as well as the big open spaces that Melbourne schools lacked.

I know for a fact that I chose the right school. I have an older brother, Pietro who finished at Damascus in 2013 and a younger sister Gemma who just started Year 7 here this year.

Since 2014, I have been working part-time at L'Espresso in Ballarat, in the prestigious position of dishwasher. I enjoy working and earning money very much, although I've yet to master the art of saving.

My hobbies include theatre and singing, and I have been a part of a few School Productions over the years, including Annie, Superman, Final Hours and The 39 Steps. Most of my fondest memories of the past four years at Damascus took place in the beloved auditorium of the College, where I spend perhaps too much time.

My favourite subjects are Drama and Maths Methods, although I have no idea why, as they are both probably the most stressful subjects I've ever studied, but the ones I enjoy the most.

Damascus is such a great environment in which to spend most of my days, as it is full of friendly staff and students and so many great opportunities.

I hope to go on to study languages after leaving Damascus, as due to my born and bred Italian parents, I have inherited the language and passion for languages that they have. I would love to work in an airport when I'm older, as having travelled back to Italy so many times in my life and associating the airport with such an exciting memory of Italy, I find airports so amazing and comfortable.

To any students starting at Damascus, I would advise you to make sure you become familiar with your teachers and the people around you. Damascus is full of supportive and helpful staff and students, and people are willing to help, if you give them the chance. Always remember to try to enjoy and appreciate every experience, class, friend, early morning and learning opportunity you come across.



## ALUMNI ART PROJECT

2015 saw the introduction of the Damascus College Alumni Art Project, where each year the College commissions a past student or staff member to explore the theme 'To live by the light of Christ' through their chosen medium.

This year's artwork was undertaken by past student Nareeda Lewers (1996) and proudly hangs in the College Reception for all to contemplate throughout 2016. This beautiful piece is Lewers' interpretation of the theme 'To live by the light of Christ.'

### ARTIST STATEMENT

#### 'To Live by the Light of Christ' (2016)

Etching on Hahnemuhle paper

Artist - Nareeda Lewers (Graduated 1996)

Exploring the idea 'to live by the light of Christ' led me to contemplate what it might mean to shape one's life not only in reference to material desires such as acquiring possessions, or personal ambition for a particular career path, but rather to live life in connection with something deeper. Depending on the individual, this may be expressed as a religious connection, or as a sense of wanting to align oneself with the greater good – living in a way that is conscious of the community as a whole, of our planet.

In this work I have tried to convey the sense that a connection with something greater than oneself can be translated into practical action in the world. I am no theologian but it seems to me that this is how the person Jesus lived his faith. His connection with God led him not only towards prayer and reflection but to change his society, helping those most in need, refusing society's characterisation of some people as less worthy than others, challenging those who abused their power.

Thus, I have chosen to depict a woman pulling on her boots. There is work to be done in the community, in the world. I hope that living our lives by light – in connection with something greater – leads us to take action in service of us all.



## MURNONG TRAIL OPENING

Three years of hard work, passion and determination culminated at the opening of the Murnong Trail on Monday 2nd November 2015.

The Murnong Trail is an 800 metre looped walking trail located in the bushland of the Damascus College 50 acre site.

The bushland at Damascus College is traversed by several well-worn tracks, one of which has now been developed as the trail.

The presence of the murnong plant, but not its cultural significance was noted at Damascus in a plant survey in 1962. Fifty years later, Science teacher, Mr David Neate, having just returned from a professional development session on indigenous agriculture, was surprised to discover a sizeable patch of murnong in flower on a casual walk through the College bushland.

"Its short flowering season, and its similarity in flower to several introduced weeds, had hidden it from view," he said.

"In December 2012, a fierce storm throughout the region felled many of the seedling eucalypts in the College bushland, leaving a huge mess to clean up. What we did not anticipate was the explosion of growth following this weather event, with a superb wildflower display that now graces part of the hillside."

Due to the rarity and its significance to the Wadawurrung people, the trail has been named in honour of the humble murnong.

In 2014, the Damascus Sustainability Committee received a \$10,000 grant from the Department of Environment and Primary Industry to clear and replant the bushland and create the trail accompanied by interpretative signage.

With the dedicated support and knowledge of Bryon Powell, Wadawurrung, the murnong trail began its journey of creation.



As a Catholic school Damascus College encourages in its faith development programme an attitude of stewardship of the environment and this is put into practice in several ongoing conservation projects around Ballarat as part of the College's Christian Personal Development Award.

Some environmentally conscious students are part of a Green Group, who assisted in trail working bees, and many students planted 500 trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the trail.

Amelia Johnson, a Year 10 (in 2015) student of Damascus College, created drawings of the murnong and other native plants, which are showcased on the interpretative signage throughout the trail.

Amelia said that she is very passionate about the environment and feels a sense of duty to protect it.

"I also love to draw and was thrilled to be involved in the creation of the pictorial elements to be used by the College to showcase the murnong trail," she said.

Damascus College will use the trail as a resource across several disciplines, including Science and Humanities.

"As part of our plans to increase the trail's usefulness, students will be involved in creating interactive resources to be accessed via an interpretive leaflet," said Mr Neate.

Murnong was the staple food crop for the indigenous peoples across south eastern Australia, and was especially noted by early European explorers such as Major Mitchell for its abundance in the grasslands of Western Victoria. It has disappeared over much of its former range as a result of livestock grazing and the development of exotic pastures and crops.

A Murnong Trail brochure was created for the opening in November 2015, which now acts as a valuable resource to the College.





## NEXTGEN EXHIBITION AT ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT

An impressive display of artworks was on show at Damascus College in October 2015 as part of the VCE Visual Arts Exhibition. The showcase included works from students studying Product Design and Technology, Food and Technology, Visual Communication Design, Art, Studio Art Photography and Media.

The VCE Next Generation 2016 Art and Design Awards exhibition opened to a packed audience in mid-February at the Art Gallery of Ballarat. This exhibition showcased the work of students who have just completed Year 12 VCE studies in Art, Studio Arts, Design and Technology. The students that took part were from Government, Catholic and Independent schools from the Ballarat and Grampians region.

The works of numerous Damascus College students were selected for this professionally curated exhibition. Talented participants from the class of 2015 were: Sophie Anstis, Abbey Browne, Caitlin Cameron, Marie-Angeline Economou, Eloise Francis, Ella-Rose Hope and Nicole Johnston.

A highlight of the opening evening included the presentation of awards to Sophie Anstis, who won the two dimensional award. This award was judged by an outside panel based on merit according to a set criteria and was valued at \$300 from a local sponsor. Sophie's collection of portraits of Damascus students composed in a blend of skin colour reflects the diverse community we have on campus. Sophie photographed students from various year levels during lunchtimes, then printed them and placed them on kitchen tiles using a specialized paper. Each tile was carefully arranged to give the diagonal graduation sought. These tiles were then adhered to a support board for display.

A warm congratulations goes to all students and staff involved in this very proud moment for our College community.

Proud mother Celia Economou stands next to her daughter, Marie Angeline's, artwork. Marie's grandmother was also present.

Sophie displaying her letter of congratulations in front of her winning artwork, Faces. One of the judges from the section panel stands beside her.





# 2015 AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS EVENING

The annual Awards and Achievement evening is a much anticipated date on the calendar to recognise and celebrate students and their significant achievement throughout the year.

On Wednesday 18th November 2015 we again travelled to the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts for the Awards event. In keeping with tradition, the College invited a past student Grant Wyatt (Graduated 2002) to speak about his life and experiences since leaving the College. Grant spoke about his professional career and what led him to his current role and place in life. He was an inspirational speaker whom imparted 5 life lessons that he took from Damascus College, which he then relearned in the workplace, these lessons were:



1. Invest in relationships
2. Stay true to your vision
3. Value every opportunity to learn
4. Discipline is essential
5. Work hard

I think we all agree that Grant's 5 life lessons above are a great motto to live one's life by, and we thank Grant for sharing his wisdom with the audience on this special occasion.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE JO REILLY AWARD

During the evening a number of awards were given to students across all year levels for Academic Excellence, General Endeavour and Sporting Prowess. In 2015 the College awarded the inaugural Jo Reilly Award; Josephine Mary Reilly was a staff member at Sacred Heart College and Damascus College from 1986 to 2009. Jo was also a student at Sacred Heart and St Martin's in the Pines from 1967 to 1973. Jo was a much loved and respected staff member who demonstrated great pride in the College and who embraced the values of the Mercy tradition. Sadly, Jo passed away whilst on staff at Damascus College on October 12, 2009.

The Jo Reilly Award was created to honour our friend and colleague. The award is intended to recognise students who espouse the values demonstrated by Jo throughout her life. This award has been created with the blessing of Jo's family members. We hope that this award will not only honour the memory of our colleague but will also inspire students to live by the values outlined below:



- The recipient will have demonstrated the following qualities in their day to day demeanour: Justice and Compassion, Humility, Generosity with their time in assisting others, A strong work ethic, Gentle in nature
- The recipient will have an adventurous spirit and will have a broad range of interests
- The recipient will show a commitment to Christian values and justice in the Mercy tradition
- The recipient will demonstrate pride in the College

Many 'special awards' were also given and the recipients of these are listed below:

### **Pierre de Coubertin Award**

Nina Kerr

### **Sports Person of the Year Award**

Ashlea Bylsma

### **Debating Award sponsored by Geoff Howard**

Joseph Short

### **Junior Social Justice Award**

Talia Waldron

### **Senior Social Justice Award**

Tayla Jans

### **Junior Performing Arts Award**

Sean O'Beirne

### **Senior Performing Arts Award**

Griffyn Pearce

### **Junior Leadership Award**

Millicent Hockey

### **Senior Leadership Award**

Sophie Anstis

### **Jo Reilly Award**

Imogen Coles

### **Damascus College Scholarship for the Arts**

Sean O'Beirne

### **Damascus College Scholarship for Sport**

Abbey Cutler

### **Damascus College Scholarship for Academic Study**

Ruby Haeusler

### **Dorothy Irene-Ellis Thomas Scholarship**

Tayla Jans & Jason White

### **Sisters of Mercy Dorothy Griffin Scholarship**

Flynn Jamieson & Matilda McKinnon

### **Catherine King Community Shield**

Sr Marie Davie RSM

### **Junior Visual Arts Acquisition Award**

Lauren Bradshaw

### **Senior Visual Arts Acquisition Award**

Caitlin Cameron





## ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH SUCCESS



In 2016 Damascus College is embarking on its eighteenth year of Energy Breakthrough competition and progress is steaming ahead for the RACV Energy Breakthrough competition in November.

Students at Damascus are lucky enough to have the opportunity to choose the Energy Breakthrough Team unit in Year 9. This is an integrated year-long unit where students access learning outcomes from a range of disciplines within the Australian Curriculum. Students investigate a range of concepts including principles of flight and aerodynamics, steering systems, drive systems, welding techniques, safety aspects in motor sports and pit crew organisation. All of this and more is supported with hands-on practical testing and experiments.

Since its inception in 1998, the Damascus EBT is a group of enthusiastic and dedicated students who are interested in bikes, mechanics and science who work throughout the year to design, build and test vehicles within detailed specifications. Their purpose is not to merely build machines but more importantly, to build people through mentoring, leadership, innovation, problem solving, adaptation, improvisation and team work.

The team now has a purpose built shed located on campus, adjacent to Jones Avenue, where students have spent over 3,000 hours since the start of the year building and testing their vehicles. In 2015 45 students were part of the team with 4 crews and each year the team takes part in the RACV Energy Breakthrough competition in Maryborough in November. The team entered two main categories, these being the Energy Efficient Vehicles and Human Powered Vehicles.

Below are the 2015 results:

- Overall runners up for Energy Efficient Vehicles
- Won the display and presentation award
- Won the Best Innovation Prize
- Received a design and construction award for junior Human Powered Vehicle

Students show great dedication throughout the year, with after school workshops running twice weekly on top of allocated class time.

Well done to all staff and students involved in the Damascus EBT, there is no doubt that the program has supported the individual growth of hundreds of students beyond the regular opportunities offered within the College.

## BLAST FROM THE PAST & INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Damascus College has grown considerably in the last 20 years, more specifically there has been extensive development and investment in the College since 2002, at a cost of more than \$18 million.

The above aerial pictures are an interesting comparison of the campus in 1995 to the campus now, picture taken in late 2015.

You will notice the complete transformation of the campus with the addition of:

2002 - the John Shannon Centre development

2008 - Stage 1 Redevelopment: Sacred Heart Wing, St Martins Resource Centre refurbishment, Mercy Wing Administration, roadworks and car parking

2010 - Courtyard roof development

2011 - Auditorium refurbishment

2011 - Stage 2 Redevelopment: Science Rooms, Staff Room & Offices, Arts & Technology extensions

2012 - Maintenance Shed and Bus Shelter upgrade

2013 - Tennis court resurfacing and irrigation system upgrade

2013 - Stage 3 Redevelopment: Bishop Connors Wing and Chapel

2014 - Oval renovations, Energy Breakthrough & Rowing Shed, irrigation systems upgrade and roadworks to rear of College

2014 - Stage 4 Redevelopment: New girls toilets and change rooms, boys change rooms, lift access for McAuley Wing, McAuley Wing refurbishment

2015 - John Shannon Centre rejuvenation, St Martins Statue and atrium renovation, irrigation system upgrade and window replacement to Science Wing

2016 - Sacred Heart Wing lift project and additional roadworks to rear of College

## MY STORY BY SAMUEL RIZZO

Hello, my name is Samuel Rizzo; I am 15 years old and I go to Damascus College.

I was born with a disability called Spina bifida and I am told that the chances of getting spina bifida is 3 out of 10,000 births. My parents told me that there was a real chance that I would not survive, due to possible complications, or that I would be a lot worse off than I am (such as being intellectually disabled).

I have lived in Ballarat my whole life. I have an older sister Cassie, who is 18 years old. My mum works as a nurse at the Day Procedure Centre and my dad is a mechanic. I am Australian, but have mixed heritage, where my Nono is from Sicily and my Nanny from Holland.

When I was 6 we went to my dad's uncle Bill's place for lunch and somehow they got me to go on the back of his quad bike. I don't know how they did it because back then I was petrified of loud noises which is common for people with Spina bifida, but somehow they did.

After that ride my life had changed. I kept on bugging my dad to get me a quad bike for Christmas; I wrote it down on a piece of paper and sticky taped it onto the bench where we have our meals every day. Then one day my dad came home with a small Atomic (which is a quad bike). It was amazing. I would ride it in the paddock next door and eventually I started racing at Allendale once a month and continued that until last year (with a bigger bike).

At the age of 8 I started playing wheelchair basketball after school. At the start I was a bit nervous and shy but the coaches were great and eventually they got me into a chair and I loved it. I remember how I never used to be able to throw a goal, as the ring is a long way up when you are sitting, but the coaches were encouraging and through practice, I started throwing goals. Now I play at the Badminton Stadium in Wendouree and I also do wheelchair track athletics.

In 2012, a Para Olympian named Richard Coleman got in contact with my mum and asked if I might like to try wheelchair athletics. In the middle of 2013 Richard started training me, and he also arranged for me to join an athletics club and the Ballarat squad, which involves a regular gym program.

After a year of training, in 2014 I entered my first race against other junior wheelchair athletes, the State Junior Championship, where I then went on to place second at the Australian Junior Nationals in Sydney, 2014.

Richard and I went on to train at Lake Wendouree in preparation for the upcoming wheelchair athletics season and the first race for the season was the Victorian All Schools Championships. I was racing myself because there were no other junior Victorian wheelchair racers that chose to race in this event. I got a few personal bests and moved on to my next race which was All Schools Junior Nationals. I had mixed emotions about this event, but had thoughts going through my head like "will all my hard work and training pay off?"

It was time to race again and with my heart pounding and my palms all sweaty, I discovered my training efforts had indeed paid off. By holding 26km/hr most of the way and sprinting the last 150m I won the race and am currently Australia's fastest wheelchair junior racer for that event.

I love being involved in wheelchair sports, it has taught me that if I train really hard, I can possibly reach my goals. It has truly changed my life and given me focus and direction. I have a dream of racing in the Para Olympics one day. If I continue to train hard, the Ballarat Squad could be invaluable to fulfilling that dream.

I am currently in Year 10 at Damascus College and life for me at Damascus is no different to anyone else; everybody accepts me for who I am and I don't think they see the wheelchair I am sitting on. I really enjoy the people at Damascus and all of the opportunities that the school offers me. My favourite subject is Health because I am interested in the way the body gets physically healthy and am interested in learning about what different food does to your body. This year I am looking forward to my VET subjects as well as going on Work Experience.

After secondary college I would like to take a gap year to train for the 2020 Para Olympics, and at the same time work towards starting a wheelchair business that makes, sells and repairs wheelchairs. My dream is to win gold at the Para Olympics in Tokyo in 2020, then go on to training and motivational speaking, whilst running my own wheelchair business.

Finally, I wish to share a piece of advice for anyone who might be reluctant to give wheelchair sports a go, my advice would be to follow your dreams, whatever they may be, get out there and give it a shot and to never give up, train hard and always smile.



# DAMASCUS ROWING SUCCESS

This year Damascus certainly made its mark as it competed in its third year in the highly coveted BAS Head of the Lake Rowing Regatta, held at Lake Wendouree on Friday 26th February.

With a long and proud history, the Head of the Lake has been in existence since 1912. It is a rowing regatta like no other, where Ballarat Secondary Colleges battle it out for school glory on the picturesque Lake Wendouree.

There is no doubt that the Damascus Rowing Program is going from strength to strength, and testament to this is the growth of the rowing crews, with 13 crews entering the Head of the Lake this year.

Mr Tom Nash, Rowing Coordinator said that the number of students getting involved in rowing is fantastic to see. This year is our largest field of crews to date.

"Winning races is a great achievement, however, the most important thing that we always forget to recognise and reflect on, is the achievement of completing a full rowing season" he said.

Before heading to the Lake on the day of the event, the rowing students were inspired by Shayne Reese, Olympian and Damascus Alumni (2000), who returned to the College to speak to the students.

Shayne has years of competitive swimming experience and she shared some of her personal practices and tips for competing with the excited and nervous athletes.

She encouraged the rowers to not give into their nerves, but to find ways to channel that energy into digging deeper and giving 110%. She advised them to remember all the hard work and training that they had done over the last 12 months to get to this point, and of course to remember to have fun on the water.

Shayne finished her time with the students by reminding them that their family, friends and team mates will love them regardless of where they finish the race. That by competing, by being part of the team, by putting in the hard work, they were all already champions.

The students showed their appreciation to Shayne for her time and words of wisdom with loud applause. Georgia Edwards (Year 12) in her role as Rowing Captain thanked her on behalf of all of the students and presented Shayne with a gift from the College.

The Damascus Rowing Program now moves to preparing for the next rowing season, where we will no doubt be a force to reckon with.

"A huge congratulations to the Damascus rowing students on making it through a whole rowing season. You should be very proud of yourselves. I also wish to thank our amazing coaches. Without their help the rowing program would not be where it is today" said Mr Nash.



## 2016 Head of the Lake Results: Damascus Girls

Year 9 div 4: 1st  
Year 9 div 3: 1st  
Year 9 div 2: 1st  
Year 9 Div 1: 1st

Year 10 div 3: 4th  
Year 10 div 2: 2nd  
Year 10 div 1: 2nd

Open div 5: 5th  
Open div 4: 2nd  
Open div 2: 4th

## 2016 Head of the Lake Results: Damascus Boys

Year 9 Div 1: 5th  
Year 10 Div 1: 5th  
Open Div 3: 3rd



## HOW THE PEACE TREE CAME TO BE

On 10th October 2015, the class of 1985 returned to the school to re-unite 30 years after completing their HSC (not VCE). A very important photo for our reunion was a photo in front of the peace tree, or more affectionately known as the cherry tree, as we planted it. The cherry tree was planted by the JAG (Justice Action Group) on August 6th 1985, to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima. The cherry blossom was chosen as it is a national emblem to Japan. On this day in 1985, students also outlined themselves in charcoal or chalk, creating shadows on the concrete around the school to symbolise the vaporisation of bodies caused by the atomic blast.

The Old Collegians were impressed by the beautiful sight that they saw with the tree in full bloom, and a group photo was taken in front of the tree.

Another landmark which celebrates its 30 year anniversary is the 'mud brick hut'. The construction of the 'mud brick hut' was completed in 1985; it was built over a 3 year period and our year level is able to take credit for its completion with many students recalling making the bricks for the building.

MARY COOPER (O'MEARA)  
(1985)



## ALUMNI SHINE BRIGHT AT AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Our nation celebrates the achievement and contribution of eminent Australians each year through the Australian of the Year Awards. Profiling leading citizens who can be role models for us all, inspiring us through their achievements. The award ceremony on 26th of January 2016 revealed that two Damascus College Alumni, Ms Judith Brewer and Br Frank Hennessey, had been recognised for their contributions to creating a better Australia.

In the Australian honours system appointments to the Order of Australia confer the highest recognition for outstanding achievement and service.

The Order of Australia has five levels:

- Knight/Dame of the Order (AK/AD)
- Companion of the Order (AC)
- Officer of the Order (AO)
- Member of the Order (AM)
- Medal of the Order (OAM)

The Officer of the Order of Australia is awarded for distinguished service of a high degree to Australia or humanity at large.

Ms Judith (Judy) Myrea Brewer of Mudgegonga Victoria was awarded the Order of Australia, Officer of the Order for distinguished service to people with a disability, particularly to those with Autism Spectrum Disorders, to refugees living in rural areas, to women, and to education. Judy was a student of Sacred Heart College between 1976 and 1979.



Congratulations to Brother Francis (Frank) Thomas Hennessey, 2016 Australia Day Honours List recipient of the Medal of the Order (OAM) of Australia for Service to Education, and to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Brother Frank was principal of St Paul's Technical College from 1983 - 1988 as well as a teacher there for many years.

# THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE

## *Alumni Story*



Margaret Briody spoke with Yvette Nesire-McNeil (past Damascus Alumni Officer) last year to tell a beautiful story of her daughter Denise, a St Martin's in the Pines past student.

Margaret Briody, originally from Langi Kal Kal, moved to Beaufort for the majority of her life and then moved to Ballarat when she turned 80. She is now a spritely 86 years of age. Margaret married and had a total of 8 children, six boys and two daughters.

Margaret's oldest daughter Denise Briody attended boarding school at St Martins in the Pines in 1972 for a period of six months. Denise had been born with a terrible disease, and was not expected to live for long, but despite the odds she made it to her late teens. During her time at St Martin's Denise became quite unwell and had to have a colostomy bag (but still attended school) and she later developed a tumour. Denise's condition worsened and she was admitted to Cabrini Hospital in Melbourne. Her parents travelled from the country farm to sit with her, the 6 boys were home in Beaufort.

Margaret and her husband said goodbye to their beloved daughter at 4pm on 9th June 1972, and unbeknown to them Denise peacefully passed away at 9pm that evening.

When Margaret and her husband returned to the hospital the following day, a nun that befriended Denise while she was in hospital asked Margaret and her husband if they would like to know what Denise had said to her after they had left the day before. The nun proceeded to tell them that Denise had said "Pray my mother has a daughter."

Despite the extended illness and the knowledge that Denise wouldn't live a long life, Margaret said that losing her only daughter took all the colour from her life. That for a long time her world was only shades of grey. Margaret still had 6 sons that she loved very much, but the loss of her daughter was a trauma her heart could barely bare. She suffered the loneliness a mother feels at the death of a child.

Six and a half months after Denise passed, Margaret had another child - a daughter. Margaret was in St John's Hospital and when they handed her new daughter to her, she said that the colour in her

life came back. That the blessing of a daughter opened her heart to the colours of the world again. This child is now 42 years old with two children of her own.

Margaret came to the end of year Mass in 1972 after Denise had passed away, at which she cried the whole time, the tears washing away some of her grief. When the family were handed the end of year book, they found a poem written by Denise in it. Margaret recited this poem to Yvette, it read:

### *Loneliness*

*Loneliness  
Can leak into a life  
like a trickle  
from a garden hose.  
It shows on the surface first  
and then takes a hold  
Not letting a soul in  
Until warmed and dried  
with a golden sun  
of a new friendship again  
after the death of the first.*

*Denise Briody.*

Margaret and her husband graciously wanted to give something back to the College, so they chose to donate a chalice which has Denise's name adorned on it with three engraved pictures - the last Supper; the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Today this chalice is used for College Masses in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel as well as whole school Masses in the John Shannon Centre - a beautiful reminder of the sacredness of life.

Chalice inscription: *In memory of Denise Briody. St Martins in the Pines 1971-1972. Passed Away 9th June 1972. Aged 18 years. RIP.*

## FINDING LIFE'S PASSION IN FASHION & COFFEE

### *Alumni Story*

I was born in Ballarat and moved to Melbourne for university, where I graduated from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) with a degree in Criminal Justice Administration. I worked at a law firm for 2 years as a legal secretary in Banking and Finance which made me realise I wanted to either go back to university to study either law or fashion! Fashion won, and I went back to school at nights and completed a diploma of Fashion Business, Merchandising and Management at the Melbourne School of Fashion.

I worked in retail while I studied at the Melbourne School of Fashion so when I finished my diploma I left the law firm to work as a retail assistant at Saba. I worked at Saba until I landed the role of Assistant Buyer at Jag and then got headhunted to work at French Connection. I started there as the Assistant Buyer in Ladieswear and then stepped into the role of Ladieswear Buyer. I worked at French Connection for 6 years and by the time I left, was in charge of the selection, ranging and quantification of the collections in 68 stores including David Jones concessions.

My duties at French Connection included a lot of analysis of sales, reorders and markdowns. I was corresponding with London merchandisers, the Hong Kong office, factories and suppliers from morning to night. We travelled to London twice a year to see the collections in the London office and twice a year to the Hong Kong office. We also did buying trips to New York and LA, as well as regular interstate travel for store visits.

When I went on maternity leave 3 years ago, my husband took a year off from his role as an insurance manager and we moved back to Ballarat and set up Yellow Espresso Cafe. I worked at a few cafes and restaurants in Ballarat while I was saving money to travel after university, so I had a bit of hospitality experience. Growing up my parents had various cafes and restaurants in Ballarat so it felt like a natural progression for me to go into this kind of business.

My husband and I always wanted to have our own business one day so we set up a cafe in Ballarat like the ones that we so enjoyed going to in Melbourne on our weekends. We feel passionate about specialty coffee, a friendly relaxed atmosphere and good food. My

work and life balance is better and I love the interaction with both our customers and staff. When things aren't too hectic, I get to have a chance to socialise with everyone and meet new people.

I started high school at Sacred Heart College (Victoria Street) which merged with St Pauls Technical College and formed Damascus College when I was in Year 10. Even though it was super challenging, my favourite memory was Outward Bound in Year 10. We spent 10 days camping in the Grampians, hiking, cooking our own food and putting up tents each night. The best thing about moving out to Damascus (Mt Clear) was the idea that the teachers treated you like adults there and that freedom made us more mature and independent. It was a more relaxed atmosphere and the idea was that if you wanted to do well you had to push yourself. My favourite subjects were Psychology, Legal Studies and French.

When thinking about careers, my advice is that it is really important to follow your own instincts. A lot of people give snippets of advice but in the long run it's essential to remember that you have to be committed to studying and/or working in that industry yourself. Take your time and take the careers counselling seriously! I was swayed by various people when it came to choosing a university course, I just went through the motions when studying criminal justice and then once I finished I realised I didn't even want to work in that industry. It wasn't until I followed my heart and studied fashion that I really enjoyed going to classes and doing the assignments. A lot of people say that working in the fashion industry isn't as glamorous as it sounds and they're right. A lot of people find it too demanding and hierarchal. My years as an assistant were very challenging but I persisted and I'm really proud of myself and glad that I did because I ended up reaching the goals I set myself and I had a rewarding career in the long run.

**SANTINA TRIGAZIS NEE CUDIA (1997)**

Owner Yellow Espresso Café



## STAFF FAREWELLS



**Casey Baxter** came to Damascus as a young graduate and taught English and mainly RE. She has contributed significantly to Reflection days, Retreats, Seeds of Justice, faith Groups and youth festivals. Her contribution in supporting the College to deepen its understanding of the religious dimension of its character has been outstanding. Casey leaves Damascus after 4 years at the College, but has exciting times ahead as she embarks on motherhood. We wish her well and thank her for all that she have been to all of us.

**Shiona Long** commenced at Damascus College in 2012 as a part time music teacher. Shiona was one extremely busy lady, who not only taught music but ran her own life coaching business. She was always extremely organised, evidenced by her large weekly planner covered in sticky notes that were colour coded. Shiona possesses a passion for music performance and we thank her for providing some wonderful opportunities throughout her 3 years, to the Damascus community. She will particularly be remembered for the Once project, in which she involved students and staff in a spectacular medley performance of songs from the musical. We wish Shiona and her family well as they re-locate to Melbourne.

**Sallie Burke Muller** leaves a big hole as she transitions to the role of Deputy Principal at Catholic College Bendigo after serving Damascus College for the past 21 years and Sacred Heart for 8 years prior to this.

Sallie has had an enormous impact on students over the years, and was also a wonderful role model to staff who were under her care. She allows and supports the growth of staff who are around her, both challenging and encouraging them. The top 5 items of legacy that we learnt from Sallie are:

Number 5 – Embrace your career as a teacher/educator

Number 4 – Don't find excuses in societies expectations

Number 3 – Embrace your faith – however that looks for you

Number 2 – Remind yourself how lucky we are to make a difference to the lives of young people

Number 1 – It's OK to have fun in the workplace

Sallie Burke-Muller has been a whirlwind of energy for her 29 years total, at Sacred Heart and then Damascus. Sallie has most recently been House Leader of McAuley and we thank Sallie for her commitment and wish her well in continuing her great contribution to Catholic education.

**Corrina Dichiera** finished her time at Damascus late last year, after 4 years in the Development and Marketing role for the College. During her time at Damascus Corrina implemented many new and innovative initiatives, where her main aim was to raise the profile of the College in the community, which she did exceedingly well.

Corrina, a past Damascus school captain, was tenacious in her approach to all tasks and strived for excellence every day. She had great determination to implement uniform changes, improve the quality of all marketing material, and introduce new College events and ways to engage with the parents of Damascus. The fantastic 20th anniversary dinner was a sensational event led by Corrina, along with development of the special 20th anniversary edition of 'The Road' last year.

We wish Corrina well in her future endeavours, and know she will be successful in whatever she chooses to do next.

**Justin Brennan** concludes his time with Damascus. As a young teacher, he has been a great addition to the staff team. He has shown great leadership in sustainability through the EBT program, the establishment of the Murnong trail with David Neate and the launch of a recycling program. He has also re-established a strong VET Sport and Recreation program at Damascus. It is great to see a former Damascus student, come staff member take his skills to one of Australia's most isolated indigenous communities on Bathurst Island to continue his work in Catholic education.

**Andrea Russell** finished up in her position of Accounts Payable Officer at Damascus College. Andrea has been an incredibly efficient and committed member of the Finance team and her contribution has been appreciated since she commenced at Damascus in January 2014. Andrea is relocating to Geelong to take up a position at Lake Imaging and she is excited about her new role.

**Christie Stevens** joined our counselling team for 2015 whilst Rebecca Petrie has been on maternity leave. Christie has shown us that counselling can be fun as there was constant laughter coming from her office each day. Christie has supported many students and their families throughout the year in a positive and life giving way and we thank her and wish her well for the future.

**Margaret Bruty** joined the education support team in 2015 and has worked with a range of students, particularly in the area of Literacy Support. Margaret utilised her educational skills to bring along some of the neediest students in the area of literacy. Margaret has also been a generous supporter of the debating program and we thank her for her contribution.

**Helen Turley** joined Damascus in 2013 as a Learning Support Officer. She was passionate about looking after those with learning needs and grew in her knowledge and understanding of young people. Helen undertook further study and shared resources and skills with the staff. Helen was well known for her quick wit and we wish her well in her next adventure.



## STAFF RETIREMENTS



**Peter Gay** has been at Damascus for 25 years, throughout this time he wore many hats as the maintenance man, landscaper, carpenter, builder and painter to name a few. He was a tireless contributor to the drama department, in particular the school production. Peter has been instrumental in the evolution of the Mt Clear site and leaves behind a legacy that we will continue to see every day we look in or out of a window at the College. Thank you Peter.

**Graham Bright** who has so capably led the development of the school magazine also retired after a career of Mathematics, Information Technology and Chemistry teaching; Graham has been part of the Damascus team since 2008.

**Yvette Nesire-McNeil.** We would like to acknowledge the retirement and acclaim the work of Yvette Nesire -McNeil who finished up in her role as Alumni Officer at the end of 2015. Prior to this role she was a teacher and in a support role that spanned 26 years at St Martin's in the Pines and then Damascus.

Yvette Nesire-McNeil may not be as well known to our current student cohort but she has been a lynch pin for our former students in her role leading our Alumni body. Yvette has been a committed Catholic educator for over 30 years including 26 years at Damascus and St Martin's in the Pines.

Yvette was instrumental in identifying the values that motivated our founding patrons Catherine, Edmund, James and Xavier, these values are on the College Banners in the John Shannon Centre. Typically Yvette goes under the radar. She sees a human need, rolls up the sleeves and gets the job done, but with heart. We wish Yvette well in her retirement and thank her for her labours. Your quiet and gracious work lives on in us.

**Di Falkinder** studied librarianship at Ballarat CAE (now Federation University) and, prior to working at Damascus College, worked as a librarian in a variety of positions including as a Children's Librarian in a public library and at Sovereign Hill.

Di commenced working at the Damascus College Library in 2003, first on a casual basis at the Victoria St Campus and then became permanent, and mainly worked as a cataloguer when the campuses merged. Always cheerful and friendly, she will be missed by all the staff and students at Damascus College.

## 2015 REUNIONS



CLASS OF 1975 - 40 YEAR REUNION



CLASS OF 1985 - 30 YEAR REUNION



CLASS OF 2005 - 10 YEAR REUNION

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**John Maher (1965)** continues to be recognized for his Carmen Road Safety Message Project. John received the 2015 City of Ballarat Community Safety Award and Australian of the Day on December 4, 2015. Over 150,000 secondary and university students have heard Carmen's road safety message: that fatigue can strike at any time. John's presentation is personal and powerful, urging his listeners to make better life decisions. We are proud to have John as one of our Alumni members.

**Helen Cullinan (1975)** now lives in Mandurah WA. Helen has many memories of her two years spent in the bush at Mt. Clear. She is now a mother of three sons and Clinical nurse at the local hospital and a nurse educator at the Murdoch University. Helen trained in nursing at St. John of God Hospital. Ballarat and midwifery at the Royal Women's Hospital. Melbourne. She has completed two Post Grad courses at University. Helen left Victoria in 1981 chasing the sun and has lived on the coast of WA for 25 years enjoying a very fortunate life.

**Paul Clack (1977 - 1980)** moved to the NT to find work after his time at school and has since obtained numerous Trade Certificates and specialises in the mining industry. Paul now works as the Electrical Superintendent of Crocodile Gold Australian Operations.

**Helen Ashton (1986)** has a Bachelor of Business - Accounting and Certificate of Catering. She has been employed at the North Eastern Hotel, Benalla Ovens Hotel, and Ovens Delaware, and Peter Rowland catering.

**Kim Anderson (1997)** has been invited to undertake a three-month residency from April until June 2016 at DRAWinternational, a centre for artistic research in Caylus, France, that focuses specifically on drawing theory and practice. DRAWinternational offers artists, teachers and students the opportunity to extend professional practice through cultural exchange, and to confront new ideas in an environment conducive to serious research and experimentation. Along with individual studio practice, the centre offers taught workshops, conferences and seminars, as well as opportunities for exhibition.

**Lauren Bourke (1999)** works for the Victorian State Library and as one of her roles supports community history events and regional museums.

**Sam Hart (2005)** after a few jobs and finding an apprenticeship in the heavy diesel industry Sam is now living in Mount Isa Qld working in a copper mine as an underground heavy vehicle operator. He started at Mount Isa as a heavy diesel fitter working in maintenance but was offered a job on a production role as a heavy vehicle operator after 12 months being underground. He moved to Isa after an 8 year stint in Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. His partner is studying nursing at James Cook University and is working part time at Mount Isa Hospital.

**Ben Taylor (2005)** after travelling overseas for two years Ben played for Victoria Amateur Football Association side University Blues. He has returned to play for Lake Wendouree for season 2016.

**Aleece MacPhail (2005)** Congratulations to Aleece who has graduated MD with Distinction and Dux of the Royal Melbourne clinical school. Aleece will be doing an intern year at the Alfred during 2016 and hopes to specialise in Infectious Diseases in the future.

The band "Hello Porkins" boasts several Damascus College Alumni; **Stephen (Steve) Goyne (2006)**, **Jacob (Jake) Bylsma (2007)** and **Joel Mc Lean (2007)**. The band released a new album "A Vegetable of Sounds" The album is composed and arranged by Jake Bylsma (with collaboration from all members), Recorded, edited, mixed and mastered by Jake Bylsma & Steve Goyne. The album is fully instrumental with some really interesting sounds. You can sample a track or purchase from [helloporkins.bandcamp.com](http://helloporkins.bandcamp.com)

**Allanah Morel nee Carter (2007)** is now a volunteer carer with Ballarat Hospice Care and studying her masters in social work through Deakin University.

**Danielle Donegan (2007)** studied Politics and has worked as Acting Chief of Staff to the Minister for Social Services in Canberra, and is now working in a role in the Public Service as Assistant Secretary for Housing Policy at the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

**David Broadway (2007)** is completing a Masters in Science at the School of Physics at Melbourne University investigating the use of Nanoscale Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy to determine the space between particles.

**Ben Oxlade (2007)** has a Cert IV Transport and Logistics: Road Transport and works as a Truck driver with Keatings Freight Lines in Shepparton. Ben is also a Volunteer Firefighter in CFA

**Chris Harry (2009)** has been appointed the manager of the newly renovated Geelong Hotel formerly the Bended Elbow. Geelong Advertiser, 6th September.

**Alyce Beaton (2010)** is manager at the Ballarat Yacht Club eatery and **Trudie Armstrong (2007)** now works there as chef.

**Sophie Burzacott (2010)** finished her double degree in International Studies and Human Resources and was lucky enough to be head hunted by Ford Motors for a HR Shared Service position. Sophie also studies online doing her Masters in HR and Organisational Development. She owes her success to her past Damascus teacher, Helen Weadon, who not only taught her English at Damascus but also was a lecturer in her Management degree!

**Sam Brown (2010)** won the City of Ballarat Youth Awards for the Visual Design Award Category. Sam has been involved in many creative projects in Ballarat including the Laneway Festival, programs and posters for the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, and the Container Bar at the Art Gallery for the Archibald prize exhibition.

**Jesse Mann (2011)** now works as a wall and floor tiler in Ballarat.

**Milan Saunders (2011)** was thrilled to receive her very first ever PAID voice acting gig. She will be voicing Sallos in "Rite of Passing", a visual novel video game by Novella Gaming.

**Lachlan Snibson (2011)** graduated from RMIT with a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering (Honours) in December 2015, with Second Class Honours.

Congratulations to the **Britt and Peterkin family** as the Inglenook Dairy has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Australian Grand Dairy Awards. Inglenook dairy has been named as one of Australia's top three full cream milk producers.

**Leon Beaton** (former staff member) has published three new books, Life is a Mystery Unfolding I, II & III. Each book features Leon's photographs with a reflective statement suitable for all ages and stages of life. Leon has presented on the story behind these books at many gatherings around Victoria.

**Hilary Gregson** (former staff member) was recognized for her work as an emergency services call taker in December 2015. Hilary was one of the winners of the 2015 Ballarat Hero Awards.

Congratulations to **Brian Te (2014)** on gaining a coveted spot with professional Futsal team Fortress Jiangmen Club who compete in the Pearl River League, China's National Futsal League. Brian leaves on 26th February to start training with his new club.



## BALLARAT GOLDEN PLATE AWARDS 2015

Damascus College past students have been well represented at the award night.

**Ryan Slater (2003)** is winning great accolades from regional and metropolitan press for his Round the Way Bagels Food Truck and was well featured on Golden Plate Awards Night.

### ROUND THE WAY

Regional Winner: Best Cafe Unlicensed and People's Choice Award  
Highly Commended - Judges Innovation Award

**Santina Trigazis (Cudia) (1997)** and her husband Leo's cafe have bought the "vibe of the city" to the bottom end of Sturt St and has received two Golden Plate awards

### YELLOW ESPRESSO

Regional Winner: Best Cafe Licensed, Highly commended: Best Coffee

## BIRTHS

**Kerry Mifsud (1995)** and her husband Ryan Gronow welcomed their son Hunter James Jeffrey Gronow born on the 8th September 2015.

**Shayne Reese (2000)** and husband Luke Harper had their first child in September last year. A son they named Ky. Shayne says he is a "pretty cool little dude! Having kids sure does change your life, it's amazing!"

**Jen Gibcus (2002)** and her husband Justin welcomed Cooper William Wood, born on the 24th June, 2015.

**Casey Wilson (2003)** and her husband Matt welcomed their second son Jackson Wallace Thompson born July 13th weighing in at 3.502kgs. All doing well.

**Kate Lamond nee Torrington (2004)** and her husband, Andrew welcomed a son on the 1st of September, Lucas Jack Lamond.

## MARRIAGES

**Jade Lemmon (2003)** and **Liam Wright (2003)** were married on the 28th November 2015 at an intimate gathering with closest friends and family. The bridal party included **Lachlan Wright (2005)** as best man, **Liam Gleeson (2005)**, **Dean Berlinger (2005)**, **Aimee Lemmon (2004)** as maid of honour, **Stacey Preston (2004)** and **Johanna Wright (2008)**.

**Clare Cooper (2006)** - married Nicholas O'Halloran in March 2015, and they have recently re-settled in Melbourne. Clare is now working at BreastScreen Victoria.

**Holly Barwick (2011)** and **Anthony Wines (2009)** got married on February 7th 2015 at York St Church of Christ. **Nathan Wines (2005)** was the best man, **Justin Gray (2009)** was a groomsman and **Laura Barwick (2012)** was a bridesmaid.

## IN MEMORY



**Carmel Veronica O'Connor nee Walsh (1968)** after a lengthy illness passed away peacefully at Warrnambool on February 29, 2016. Aged just 64 years. Carmel was the dearly loved wife of Peter (dec.). Carmel had two sons, Tim and Joseph. Carmel was originally from Terang, but some of you may have known her from her days boarding at St. Martins in the Pines.

A requiem Mass was held for Carmel on Friday 4th of March at the St Thomas Catholic Church in Terang.

**John Jamieson** - Late last year, Damascus College was saddened to learn of the death of John Jamieson. John joined the staff of the Catholic Education Office in the 1980's as a Secondary Curriculum Consultant. He quickly demonstrated a depth of wisdom which came from a long career in education. He was passionate about all students having the best educational opportunities. He also quickly identified the need for each school to have clear Vision and Mission statements upon which policies were developed. In the 2016 educational environment this is standard practice for all schools, but in the 1980's in many Catholic schools only the most basic documentation was in place. In some cases it required all of John's considerable powers of persuasion to convince school leaders of the importance of such documents.

John was also visionary. He saw possibilities for the Ballarat Catholic community to have access to a co-educational secondary college for students in the Greater Ballarat area. He was the first chairperson of the Steering Committee for the establishment of a Catholic secondary co-educational institution in Ballarat East, a position he held until his retirement. This Steering Committee was the group that did much of the preliminary work which led to the establishment of Damascus College. On 20th April, 1995 John was elected as Interim Chairperson of the Damascus College Board until such time as the members felt they could make an informed decision on the election of a permanent Chairperson. John was duly elected on 16th November 1995 as Chairperson of the Damascus College Board.

In recent years John did not enjoy good health. However the Damascus College community was delighted that he was well enough to attend the 20th anniversary celebration dinner in March 2015. Although quite frail, many past and current staff, Board and Working Party colleagues enjoyed reminiscing with John about the challenges and achievements of those founding days of Damascus College. John could certainly look with pride at the excellent educational institution that Damascus is today.

The Damascus College community extends its sympathy and continued prayerful support to John's wife Joan and to the Jamieson family. John's grandson's **Jai (Yr 12, 2015)** and **Flynn (Yr 11, 2016)** continue the Jamieson family connection to the College.





# Free community event at Damascus College

# Parenting Strategies for Teenage Success

With Darren Pereira

*Providing practical tools on how to create a positive home environment conducive to raising a child's academic performance, mental health and wellbeing.*

Wednesday 18th May 2016 at 7pm

Venue: John Shannon Centre, Damascus College



Please visit the Damascus College website to book your FREE tickets online at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

## ALUMNI

Damascus College Ballarat  
Sacred Heart College  
St Martin's in the Pines  
St Paul's Technical College

As a past student or staff member of Damascus College Ballarat, or any of the founding schools, we invite you to provide your contact details by visiting our website at [www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au) and selecting Past Students or return the Connecting @ Damascus form.

Providing us with this information ensures that we can

- Keep you up to date with Alumni News
- Inform you about reunions
- Deliver "The Road" to you

If you have already registered your information with us, **THANK YOU**



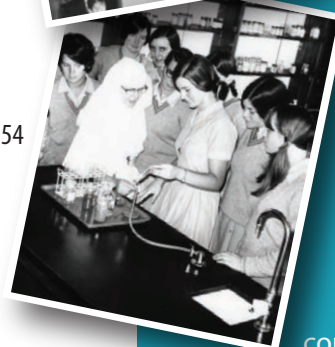
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## 2016 reunions

- School Class 2006 ... 10 Year
- School Class 1996 ... 20 Year
- School Class 1991 ... 25 Year
- School Class 1986 ... 30 Year
- School Class 1976 ... 40 Year

It is our aim is to have as many of your exit year group as possible attend and participate, including those who may have left at other times but identify best with this year group. The reunions are usually held in October or November.

[connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au)