

THE END OF AN ERA -  
SR MARIE DAVEY RETIRES

# The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

SPRING 2017



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# FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MATTHEW BYRNE

Welcome to the final edition of The Road for 2017. As the calendar year draws to a close we look back across the many wonderful dimensions of life at Damascus College across the year. At the heart of the community are the students of Damascus College and the school's achievements can only be measured in their successes!

As I write this newsletter the graduating class of 2017 are completing their exams and they will join the College Alumni. They have been a remarkable group of young men and women who we proudly send forth into the global community. I acknowledge and thank those families for whom 2017 marks the end of their Damascus journey and hope that you remain connected with us through forums such as this, the facebook page and the website. We were fortunate to celebrate the Year 12's final day of classes by welcoming back Isaac T Moses who was known as John Bath when he completed Year 12 at Damascus in 2007. Isaac captured the young people of the College with the story of his plight as a refugee and he implored the students not to see refugees as people wanting to take jobs or resources, but to see them simply as people who seek to be safe. His message was inspirational and the students genuinely heard what he had to say. We are very thankful for him coming back to share his story.

This year we have celebrated a jubilee of Mercy education at Mt Clear and as we celebrate 50 years of Mercy educational vision and leadership on this site we concurrently celebrate the conclusion of Sr Marie Davey's educational vocation which has spanned 53 years. Marie was the final principal of Sacred Heart College, she has been Principal or Deputy Principal of Damascus College since its inception in 1985. Marie was the key driver of the decision to bring the College to a single campus and has continued the vocation of the sisters who preceded her by always being responsive to the demand for change to meet the needs of the young people of the day – and across her 53 years of education Marie has seen some very significant educational and societal change that has required schools to respond.

I acclaim and acknowledge the educational leadership, pastoral support and friendship offered to so many over her life as a teacher within Mercy education. She is a proud past student of Sacred Heart and her ministry in the service of God and in the image of Catherine McAuley has been remarkable. In 2017 as we celebrate 50 years of Mercy education on this site, we also acknowledge that it is quite possible that Marie may be the last Sister of Mercy in School leadership not only at Damascus, but perhaps in the Diocese of Ballarat. I thank Marie for all she has been to the students, their families and the staff who she has worked alongside for generations. She has been a wonderful mentor to me as a developing principal and she has been a great support to our family as we moved to and have grown up in Ballarat. On behalf of all the families and colleagues and religious you have supported Marie - Thank you!! An evening of celebration for Marie will take place on Friday, the 1st of December and it would be great to welcome as many past and current members of the school community as possible. Details are on the College website.



As the year concludes, I must acknowledge the great staff team of the College and the important work that they do. Particularly, I must recognize the retirement and celebrate the contribution of; Donnie Davidson, Jenny Kinghorn, Catriona Sexton, Bronwyn Strachan and Mollie Cleary who will retire from the classroom at the end of 2017 following distinguished teaching careers. Donnie, Jenny, Catriona, Bronwyn and Mollie have been amazing contributors to Damascus and the founding schools and I thank them for their part in the Damascus journey! I also recognise Head of Sport, Matt Rea who will finish at Damascus at the end of 2017 and thank him for all that he has brought to our community, particularly the re-introduction of rowing. I also thank our two Canadian visitors; Brian Veerlan and Colin Schroeder for the energy they have brought to our College this past year.

Joseph Cahir has capably led the Damascus College Board in 2016 and 17 and we thank him for his leadership as he steps aside for Michael Myers in 2018. Brett Bryant will also finish up on the Damascus College Board after 17 years and on behalf of the entire community I thank him for his generous contribution. Brendan Maher will also finish up on the Damascus Board. Brendan has been the foundation principal of Emmaus Catholic Primary School and the collaboration achieved between the two schools has been instrumental to Damascus' success within the contemporary Ballarat educational landscape. Brendan has built a wonderful school and we wish him well in the future as he and his wife Jillian move to Yarram.

Finally, just as I started, it is the young men and women of this College that make it great and it has been wonderful this year to see the growing interplay between past and current students at the different College events throughout the year.

Thanks for being part of the Damascus community and blessings for the festive season ahead!

# SR MARIE DAVEY, OUR OWN VERSION OF CATHERINE MCAULEY



Sr Marie Davey with her mother, 1965

Marie Therese Davey was born on 14th July 1946 at her home in Ballarat North, and she always said that she and her five siblings were born at home because her parents wanted to make sure they didn't get mixed up with anyone else's babies in the hospital.

"I believe I was to be named after my aunt who died before I was born, Elizabeth, but evidently she didn't like her own name but had a great devotion to Sr Therese, so my parents decided to call me Marie Therese in her memory."

Marie went to St Columba's Primary School in Ballarat North until Grade 8, where she then progressed on to Sacred Heart College. Her favourite subjects were Music and Geography, and she took great delight later in life, when she went overseas visiting places that she had learnt about in both of these subjects.

She has fond memories of her family home, where she spent most of her childhood, in this double fronted house with four bedrooms and only one bathroom and toilet. "We claimed that we were posh and had an outdoor and an indoor toilet - in reality it was one toilet - had two doors - one from outside and one from the inside."

Marie is the youngest member of the family with five siblings; four brothers and one sister.

"I have one sister who is 17 years older than I am, she is now retired after raising four children, and we are top and bottom of the family with four boys in between."

"My oldest brother died in 2015, he was retired but had previously worked in a bank and then various other clerical jobs, he had six children. My next brother was a pharmacist, now retired and living in Echuca, he has four children. My third brother was a priest and was Parish priest in Ararat for 27 years before he retired due to poor health, he died in 2016. Finally, my fourth brother was four years older than me and was killed in a car accident when he was nine."

She has many nieces & nephews, great nieces & nephews and now lots of great greats. Family gatherings are always great occasions.

Marie's father was a train controller on the railways, and her mother was a homemaker until she went back to work in a clerical position when Marie was nearly finished school. "We were pretty much a middle class family, we had what we needed, but not a lot of excess."

"My parents were my greatest role models. I remember going in to work with my father as a child and he had these big sheets of graph paper on his desk mapping where the trains were around the state. He would have loved to have worked on computers to do that today, but it was all hand done then."

Marie's hobbies included craft activities, especially knitting, as her mother taught her how to knit, and later extended to silk dying where she made scarves. She also made a lot of her own clothes and loved to potter in the garden with her father. She liked tennis, and made it to the A grade competition, but confessed that she believes it was more for lack of numbers to fill the team rather than her great tennis ability.

She was born and raised in Ballarat and apart from a holiday job in retail when at school, her one career has been as a teacher. Marie enjoyed working with children and studied teaching at Sacred Heart Teachers' College which later became Aquin Training College, the precursor to Aquinas College which became the Ballarat Campus of ACU.

Upon graduation, her first teaching class was Grade 3 at St Columba's in 1965. She moved into teaching in secondary education when she moved to teach in Warracknabeal in 1970. In 1979 she returned to study to complete a Bachelor of Education (Music) at Burwood State College and Bachelor of Theology at Catholic Theological College Clayton concurrently. Study for Masters in Education followed later with weekends taken up with travelling to Melbourne while teaching at Sacred Heart College.

"It is such a long time since I began teaching that I have since taught the children and grandchildren of those that I first taught at St Columba's in 1965. So this means that this year I am in my 53rd year in education, and I think I need to retire before I teach their great grandchildren."

As a teacher Marie enjoyed teaching Humanities (especially Geography) and Music, which were her favourite subjects to learn in school. "I also enjoyed teaching RE, especially at Year 9 and 10 level at Sacred Heart when we had a great team working together."

Marie was raised a Catholic and her family was heavily involved in the local school and Parish community, and so the Church and its practices were a part of who they were as a family. She first joined the Sisters of Mercy as a postulant (a 'trying out' phase) on 17 March, 1965, and was professed as a Sister of Mercy on 10 February, 1968.

"As a teacher at St Columba's, I began as 'Miss Davey' and then became 'Sr Marie' later that year. I was strongly influenced by some of the Sisters that taught me, in both Primary and Secondary school. I particularly liked the way that they were part of the Parish and school community, and cared for the people who needed them in those communities."

"I fleetingly considered joining a Missionary Order which would have taken me to far off lands, but I decided my calling was to the local area and opted for the Sisters of Mercy, Ballarat East. I have not regretted that decision."



Sr Anne McMillan and Sr Marie Davey, 1973



Sr Marie Davey and the boy next door, 1952

The Sisters of Mercy are such a special and unique congregation, as they follow in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831. The Sisters have the vision to look for what is needed in the world at any time, and to respond to those needs. "This is probably the case for many groups of Sisters, but I think we have a particular 'down to earthiness' that makes us special, and I think this comes from Catherine McAuley."

Put simply, Marie has stayed in education for 53 years because she enjoyed what she did. "I love working with young people and I hope that I have made a difference in their lives as they have in mine. I have been lucky to be with such a range of young people and have always liked the way our students are ready to greet you – sometimes a long time after they have left the College. This is definitely a reward for what we put in as teachers."

Some of Marie's fondest memories of her time as a teacher in Catholic education would be working with those students and families who provided a challenge to us, and seeing them through to finish their schooling on a positive note.

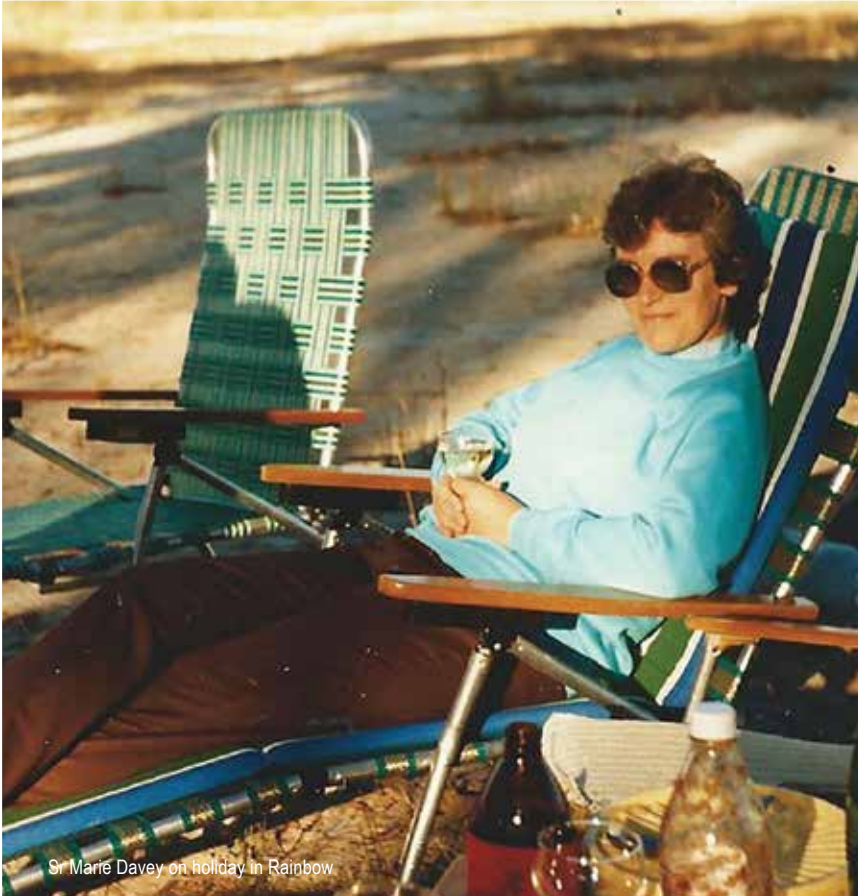
She acknowledges that she might be remembered for closures – closing the boarding schools in Warracknabeal, then St Arnaud, then Sacred Heart College Ballarat – a bit of a pattern was forming. She then went on to close the school at Sacred Heart and later the Victoria St campus of

Damascus College. She jokes that maybe she was a bit of a liability, and that maybe it is now time to move on before the axe falls again.

"There is no danger of that though. One of the things I am most proud of is the establishment and growth of Damascus College to be the wonderful place that it is today. This wasn't just me of course, but I would like to think I have had some influence as we struggled through our early years to develop the culture of a new College, whilst honouring the foundations and contributions of the previous schools. It takes a long time to bring about change such as this, and I think it is only since we came together to one site in 2011, that we have really 'come of age' with our own Damascus College identity."

As Marie retires at the end of this year, we asked her for a piece of advice to impart to students, staff, parents and members of our Damascus community, Marie said for us all to "keep putting the best of yourself in to whatever you do. The family and the school have to work together for the sake of the students. I think our Teacher Advisor system gives us a great foundation to do this but it does take commitment from every individual to get the best out of it."

"Looking back on my life, I have no regrets – I'd do it all again – probably a bit differently, and so better at times, but ultimately I'm happy with my life and comfortable with who I am."



Sr Marie Davey on holiday in Rainbow



Final Profession in 1973

Marie now looks forward to a well earned retirement, she doesn't have any long term plans at present, but is mostly looking forward to having the time and space to reflect and look forward peacefully to the next stage.

One of my favourite reflections comes from the writings of Thomas Merton: "You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment, and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope." This is my approach to 2018 and beyond.



Siblings Bill, Peter, Brendan, Marie and Margaret in 2011

# SR MARIE DAVEY MILESTONES

1946

Born July 14, at home in Ballarat  
North – Doveton Street.



1949

Moved house to live in  
Drummond Street North.



1972 - 1974

Back to Ballarat (teaching again at St Columba's) to prepare for Final Profession in January 1973. My dear Dad died in his sleep on the night of my final profession so the family photo that day is significant.

Then back to Warracknabeal for another two years (closed the boarding school).



1970 – 1971

St Mary's, Warracknabeal – my first launch into the secondary teaching – the school then went to Year 10. I loved it, both the place and the teaching.



1968

First Profession as  
a Sister of Mercy  
February 10.

1975

St Arnaud for just one year,  
but in that time closed the  
boarding school.

1976 – 1978

Back to Ballarat to Sacred Heart  
College for teaching and boarder  
supervision – they closed the  
boarding school in 1978!

1977

My first overseas trip which was to  
Malaysia and Hong Kong – on a trip  
which my brother won but he wouldn't  
fly at that time so he gave it to my  
mother and me!





**1951**  
Started school and used to ride my bike to school with my "big" brother who was four years older than me.



My sister moved to Queensland to work. She went by ship, it was a big day when we went down to see her off.

Mike (brother) was killed in a car accident in November that year.



**1951 – 1959**  
At school at St Columba's Ballarat North.

**1960 – 1963**  
Proficiency (Year 9) to Matriculation (Year 12) at Sacred Heart College.

**1961**  
Brother Brendan ordination at St Patricks Cathedral, Ballarat.



**1965 – 1969**  
Novitiate and on to Profession as a Sister of Mercy.

Teaching at St Columba's, St Alipius, OLHC Wendouree.



**1965**  
Began teaching at St Columba's, and entered the Sisters of Mercy.

**1963 – 1964**  
Two year Teacher training at Sacred Heart Teachers' College. I moved to live at Patrician House with the first group of trainee teachers in the hostel.



**1979 – 1982**  
Studying in Melbourne, living in our community house in Blackburn and studying B.Ed Music at Burwood and B Theology at Clayton.

**1983 – 1994**  
Back to Sacred Heart to teach and Deputy Principal, because there were no boarders I was now placed in charge of the hostel at Patrician House (for first year teachers at Aquinas).

**1986**  
Another win – I put my niece in for a trip to Hawaii and she won! She took me with her!



Staff 'Mourning Tea' at the end of Sacred Heart



1991 – 1994

Towards the end of 1991 the decision was made to amalgamate Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's to form a new co-ed secondary school. I was appointed Principal – perhaps to put my 'closure skills' to work again?

This was a challenging few years with lots of decisions to be made about the new venture and the winding up of 114 years of history of Sacred Heart. We had some good times in that last year to mark the occasion. I remember our closure celebrations where we processed up and down through the building turning off lights and locking doors behind us!

But then on a happier note what a great day when we took the whole school to Luna Park – we weren't going out with a whimper!



2009 – 2010  
Co-Principal with Matt Byrne  
– with much work to do to work towards the move to one campus for 2011.

2009  
It took us five years to get to the stage of Year 9 moving to Mt Clear – leaving Year 7 and 8 at Victoria Street.

Year 7 and 8 started with the Teacher Advisor system which then was introduced at Mt Clear with Year 9 and 10 the following year.

2004  
In principle the decision was made, after much discussion, to move to one campus at Mt Clear.

2005  
New Principal – Tony Duggan commenced.

2011  
New Principal – Matt Byrne. Damascus College became one site at Mt Clear – lots of development on the site working towards getting rid of portables. The development of the site over the last seven years has been amazing – what a beautiful place to work!



2015  
Celebrated 50 years in Catholic Education.

1995

Damascus College commenced with John Shannon as the first Principal.

A week later my mother died. What a time of endings and beginnings!



### 1998 – 2016 TRAVELS

In 1998 I went to China. 2002 saw us in Europe with some study in Ireland and a stay at Catherine's House in Canada. 2004 brought about a trip to France with the first Damascus group that went to France. In 2006 a visit to the Dublin Mercy Ed Conference – via Utah (Change conference) and Canada! 2008 took us to Canada again for a study tour with CEO leading into our Teacher Advisor introduction to Year 7 and 8 in 2009. In 2014 a Holy Land tour with St Patrick's Cathedral Parish and Italy. And last year, 2016, to Switzerland and France with Damascus students.



2016

Turned 70 – time to start thinking about hanging up the school boots!

2017

Decision to finish at the end of this year. Many "last time" events!



I have had a good journey – have worked with some great people and feel very confident leaving Damascus College in the hands of those who will continue to grow the Mercy spirit in the College and take it to all those associated with it.

# SR MARIE MEMORY WALL

## A FEW MESSAGES FROM STUDENTS AND STAFF

I was in grade six, and as the oldest, applying to high school was a complete mystery to myself and my parents. We had no idea, and had mistakenly not applied to more than one school. I was rushed in two days before the first testing day at Damascus for an interview with Sr Marie. She spoke kindly to myself and my mum, but told us that there was a waiting list for the next school year. Panic ensued. However the next day, my mum got a call from Sr Marie herself, advising her that I would be accepted into Damascus. Sr Marie didn't need to call the very next day, but from the kindness of her heart she made a personal call to put our worries at ease. For the remainder of my time at Damascus, and that which I achieved, I would always silently thank Sr Marie not only for clearing the path for my enrolment, but for her compassion towards two extremely stressed people.

**MADDISON NEWMAN**

Class of 2011



Sr Marie Davey Novitiate in 1965, and on Profession as a Sister of Mercy, 1968



Sr Marie Davey with statue of St Martin de Porres in St Martin Resource Centre at Damascus, 2015

Marie kindly instructed me re the etiquette when I started at Damascus, that she is Marie to adults and Sister Marie, in front of students. Marie and I both have a delight in common with the Dr. Blake Mysteries. I have many delightful remembrances of the kindness and delight that Marie has spread across the decades with students, staff and friends.

**VIKKI HOLFORD**

Learning Support Officer

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You are my light and my salvation' (Psalm 27:1) and I will be forever grateful that you showed me the path to Damascus.

**KERAN MEWETT**

Transition Coordinator

Sr Marie was one of three Damascus College staff members who went on the 2016 French Language Trip with sixteen Year 10 and 11 students. We travelled around France for two weeks together and all of us came to know her much better than we previously had in the setting of the school campus. I remember sharing our amazement with each other after an incredible concert of Vivaldi's Four Seasons in Paris, a conversation in which we discovered her love for classical music. There was our time in Switzerland, where she laughed at our amazement of finding real white snow in an abundance, which was unbelievable to Australian tourists. And then in Lyon, where we all sat in a beautiful park together one day, simply chatting, eating, and laughing. Each of us loved having Sr Marie on the trip and came back to school better knowing how lucky we were to have her at Damascus.

#### SEAN O'BEIRNE

2018 Damascus College School Captain

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The memory that resides with me of Sr Marie's caring wisdom is of an interaction of few words, but one that meant a lot to me. It was at the Victoria Street Campus, in 2008. My Mum had been hospitalised in SA with terminal cancer, and I had returned to work pretty churned up. Then came the day when the hospital called to say that Mum's condition had gone downhill suddenly. I met Marie, and tentatively sought leave to go to Mum. I remember the words Marie used, both for their brevity and for their pragmatic empathy. "David, just go". I obeyed, and I went. Thanks Marie, and God bless.

#### DAVID NEATE

Teacher

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I remember our flute lessons with Sr Marie, in room 4, up the top of the front stairs at Sacred Heart. We were 3 to 4 in a group for each lesson and Sr Marie was very patient with us. It took 3 weeks for me to finally get a sound out of the instrument and not once did I feel slow or dumb :) which I credit to Sr Marie.

I remember Sr Marie to have a great love of music which she has no doubt passed on to thousands of students.

#### KERRY BOYKO

Class of 1989



Sr Marie Davey on holiday in Venice 2014

Dear Marie,

I went to you when...

I needed to do something, because you always knew the best way to go about it!

When I wanted to know something, because you are a wealth of information!

When I was in tears, because your hugs were so comforting!

When I felt a sense of despair, because that sense of despair was always much less when I left your office!

Now you're leaving Damascus and I won't know where to turn. However, this is your time and I hope that it will be amazing. Time to do what you want to do, when you want to do it. Enjoy that, because you certainly deserve it. Take good care. Don't forget us because we will never forget you.

Love and best of wishes.

#### CATHY PRUNTY

Special Needs Co-ordinator



## A REFLECTION ON THE 2017 TIMOR LESTE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Every year Damascus College runs a Timor Leste Immersion program, and Simon Carroll, Damascus First Aid Officer, had only recently returned from his family trip to Timor Leste, before he applied for the 2017 Immersion Program, 22 June – 3rd July 2017. Simon said that this family trip instilled in him a love for the place; the people are very welcoming and time seems to slow down when you are there.

“If you listen carefully to what will help the local Timorese people, you can make a big difference with a small, well-thought out investment of time, effort and sometimes other resources too. The results of doing this can be very rewarding,” he said.

The focus of the 2017 Immersion Program, attended by eleven Year 11 students and four staff, was on cultural exchange, primarily between members of the student body of Damascus College and that of its sister school Eskola Santa Maria, Ainaro. The students of both schools spent time together which included Damascus students delivering English classes on a variety of topics, to their peers in Ainaro.

“The students also engaged in classroom activities with a conversational English class nearby and we all immersed ourselves in local town life as much as possible. We walked a lot to explore the area and observed the way people live in Timor,” he said.

In the lead up to the program, the students and staff spend 12 months fundraising to then donate to the Timorese people. In both Ainaro and Dili, the group delivered funds directly to a number of important organisations and initiatives that in turn, provided information about their services and programs. This provided an invaluable educational experience as it helped the group to understand issues faced by the people of Timor on a daily basis.

“The trip relies heavily on church connections, so we participated regularly in the Catholic culture of Timor, this involved attending morning Mass on a number of occasions and having regular contact with the local parish community.”

“Many aspects of the Timorese culture are very different to Australian culture and at times this can be a little confronting, for example the way animals are valued is very different from here. There are many really positive aspects too, one of these is the way the local people publically acknowledge and engage with visitors and each other. For the most part you see a level of community engagement and happiness in comparison to what we see on the streets of Ballarat.”

Upon his return from Timor, Simon reflected on the highlights of his trip and he particularly enjoyed the daily group reflections, and the engagement of Damascus students in this process.



Alma Sister with Imogen Coles



Simon Carroll with the Timorese locals

“It was obvious that they learned a lot about empathy and gratitude. In fact, I think we all did.”

“The social connections that students made with their fellow Damascus students as well as the Timorese students were also exciting to watch. By the end of the trip the group interacted very different from the way they did at the start. It became like a big family really quickly. Group members also came to grips with the task of making Timorese friends more easily as the trip went on,” he said.

“Throughout the trip there were many times all of us were ‘stretched’ or ‘challenged’ for one reason or another, but we reminded ourselves regularly of how fortunate we were to have this very special opportunity, and that we should make the most of everything we experience. We coined the term ‘full immersion’ which helped many of us to overcome obstacles that lay before us.”



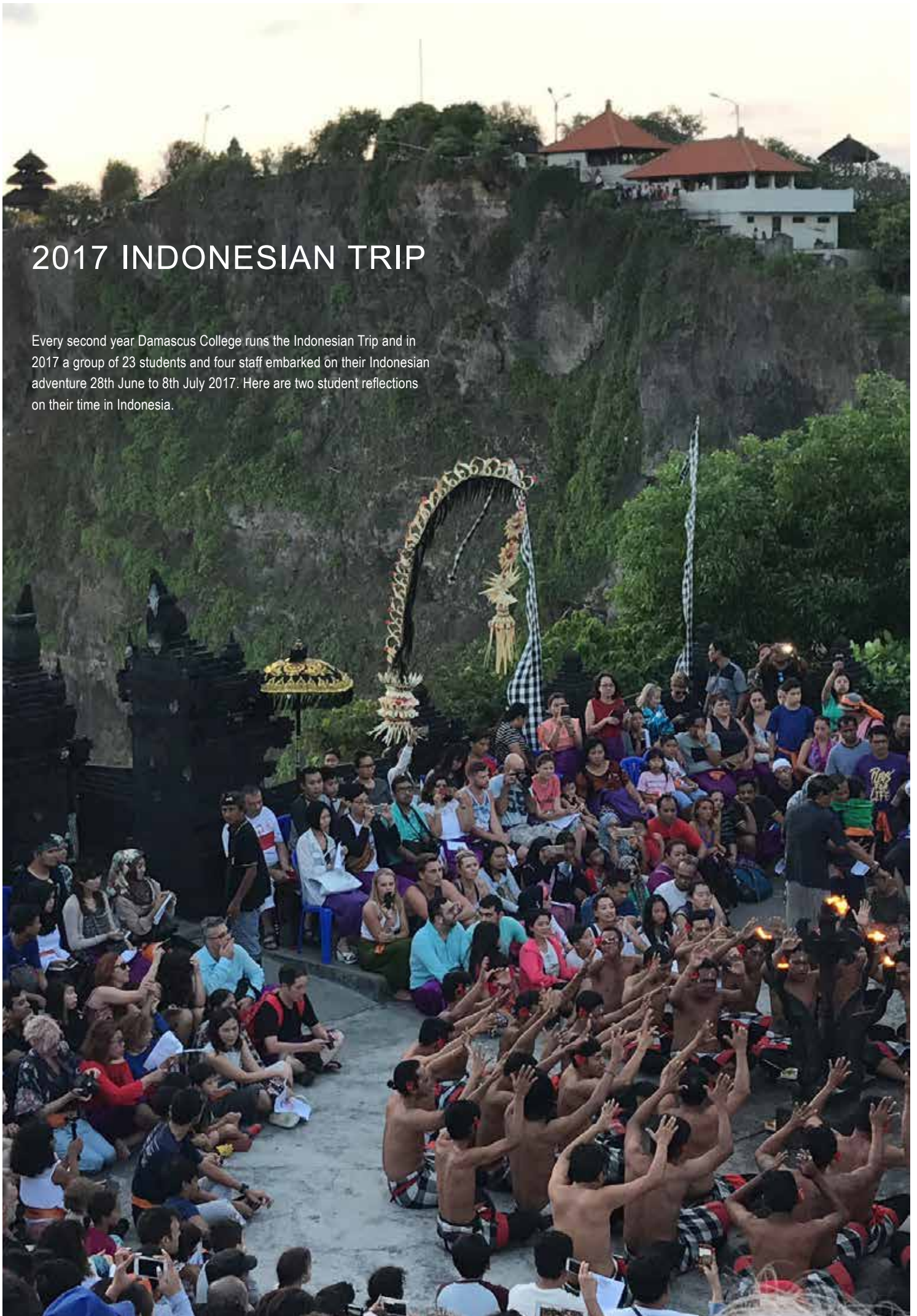
**SIMON CARROLL**  
Damascus First Aid Officer



Cristo Rei

# 2017 INDONESIAN TRIP

Every second year Damascus College runs the Indonesian Trip and in 2017 a group of 23 students and four staff embarked on their Indonesian adventure 28th June to 8th July 2017. Here are two student reflections on their time in Indonesia.





My name is Ethan Handley, a Year 10 student at Damascus College, and this year I was lucky enough to go on the Indonesian trip. I chose to go on this trip to experience a different culture in a fun way and to further my Indonesian language skills that I have been studying since Year 7.

Whilst in Indonesia, we participated in language lessons to help improve our skill levels. We visited lots of historical places and sight-seeing hotspots, and we walked numerous markets, which helped us to practice our bargaining and language skills, with the local people of the city.

The Prambanan temples and the Borobudur temple was a huge monument that literally took our breath away, due to their amazing architecture and the sheer size of the temples.

We rode in planes, trains, buses and automobiles to see the many sights of the country. Visiting Mt Bromo was fantastic, as we crossed the sea of sand and climbed the mountains built in 250 steps to reach the edge of the active, smoking volcanic crater, where we enjoyed the spectacular view of the surrounding scenery.

We visited a local school in Bali, where we were welcomed with open arms by all the students and staff. They gave us an insight into their local culture and how their school operated, it was highly enjoyable to converse with new people in activities that were prepared for our visit.

The Indonesian culture is completely different to the Australian culture, and whilst on the trip I learnt that I am extremely lucky to be born in Australia and to have the simplest things in life, like clean running tap water, as it is a luxury and a blessing in Indonesia.

I realised the importance of learning and developing my knowledge about different cultures before jumping to conclusions and judging others for who we perceive them to be.

I had an amazing time and cannot pinpoint my one highlight, as I enjoyed every part of it. The atmosphere of the country and the people we met were so welcoming and added to my enjoyment of the experience.

I would highly recommend any student thinking about going on this trip to do it, it opens your eyes up to the bigger picture and is an experience you will treasure for the rest of your life.



**ETHAN HANDLEY**  
Year 10

Hi, my name is Hayley Maisey, a Year 11 student at Damascus College. The Indonesian trip is open to students in Year 9-12 who study Indonesian. This year I was selected to go on the Indonesian trip as part of a group of 23 students from all four year levels, and four staff members.

I have loved studying Indonesian since Year 7 and when the opportunity for me to go on the trip arose, I applied instantly.

I have been overseas before, but never to a third world country. When we first arrived and travelled through Yogyakarta I was a bit surprised by the amount of rubbish on the streets and the size of the houses. It was confronting but also enlightening, and it made me want to discover more about Indonesia.

Having learnt Indonesian for four years, I was excited to read the local road signs and to understand most of the locals. I didn't realise how important a second language was until I was able to use it to speak to the locals in their native tongue.

Mt Bromo volcano was definitely one of the highlights for me and watching the sunset over the volcanoes was mesmerising.

We visited 'Negeri 2 Kuta Selatan' Junior High School, where we played sport with the local students and watched a performance that they prepared for us which included a cultural Kecak dance. We then performed 'We are one' and the Australian National Anthem for them, it was great fun.

I take away with me many fond memories of an amazing trip, and I would definitely recommend it to all students wanting to continue the Indonesian language at Damascus.



**HAYLEY MAISEY**  
Year 11



# 50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF MERCY EDUCATION

On Saturday 28 October we celebrated 50 years of Mercy education on our beautiful site, where we welcomed more than 500 attendees, including past and current students, staff and families of Damascus College, Sacred Heart College, St Martin's in the Pines and St Paul's Technical College.

It was wonderful to welcome more than 25 Sisters of Mercy who made the trip to celebrate this milestone in Mercy history.

The celebration commenced at 2pm with a formal program of events, including Sr Berenice Kerr, Co-Governor Damascus College who led us in prayer and introduced the College choir, who sang the 'Suscipe' dedicated to the Sisters of Mercy.

Mr Matthew Byrne, Principal Damascus College gave an introduction followed by Sr Veronica Lawson who replied on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy, speaking of the significance of this site to the Sisters of Mercy. We then welcomed Dr Sandra Harvey, Class of 1973 who gave a speech on behalf of the past students of all Colleges. Sandra spoke of how her Mercy education has shaped her life, and it certainly was an inspiring story for everyone to hear.

The College choir sang a beautiful rendition of 'For the beauty of the earth', before Mr Matthew Byrne, Sr Marie Davey, Sr Berenice Kerr and Fr Adrian McInerney cut the 50th anniversary cake. Sr Marie Davey, Deputy Principal Damascus College thanked everyone for attending before the official blessing of the Commemorative Walk.

To commemorate the 50 year anniversary, we blessed the Commemorative Walk; 240 metre walking track, commemorating sponsors, past and current students and staff of Damascus College and our three foundation Colleges.





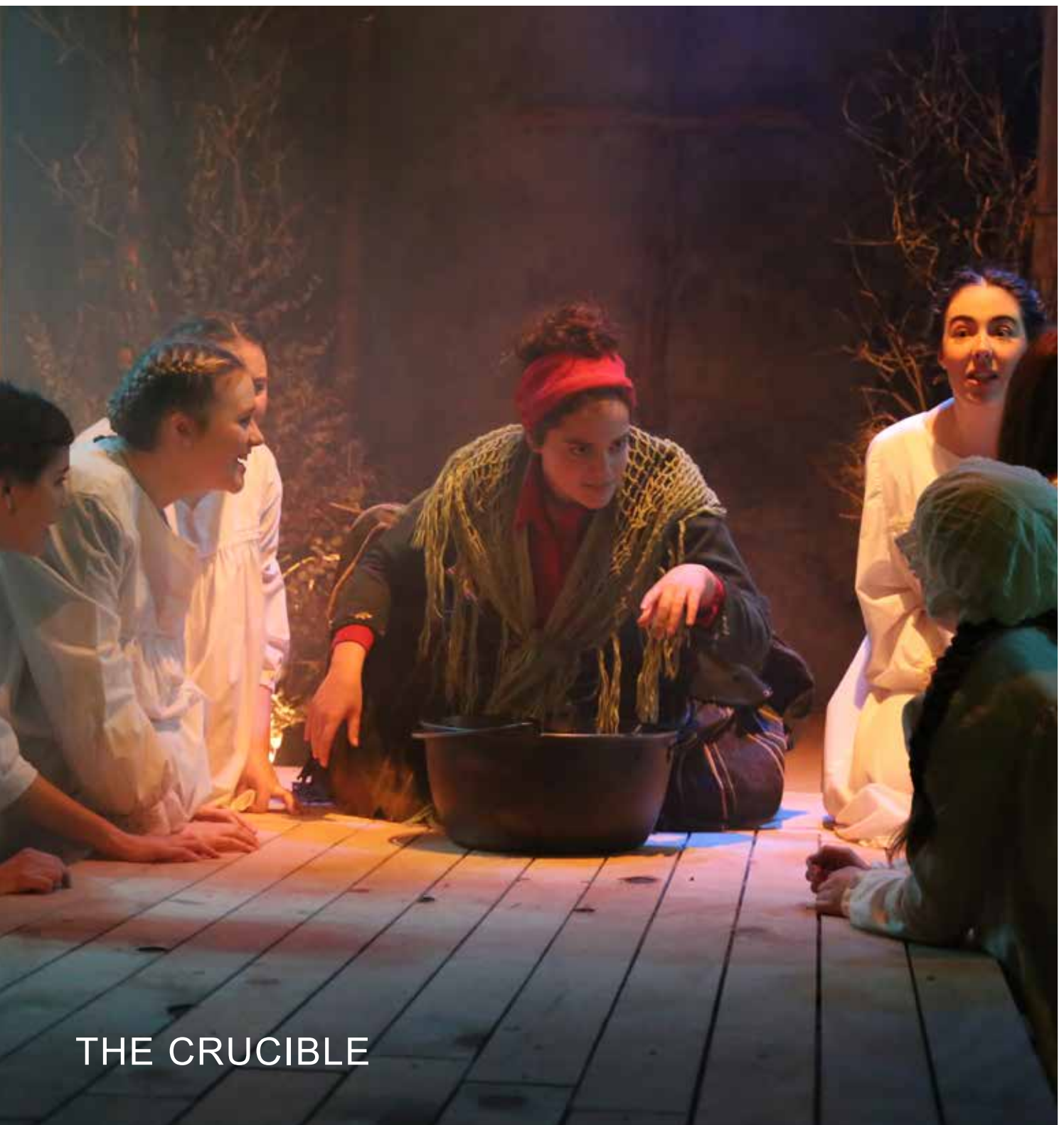
## THE FINAL HOURS

CELEBRATING 14 PRODUCTIONS  
IN 27 YEARS

Every second year Damascus College presents 'The Final Hours,' a theatrical presentation of the last few hours of Jesus' life.

As always, it was performed during Holy Week on 11 April – 14 April 2017, where the College campus was transformed back to the Middle East of 2000 years ago, to tell the tale of the last few hours of the man we call Jesus.

A cast and crew of over 40 students from Years 8-12 featured in the production. We sincerely commend the work of all students and staff involved in this wonderful production, it truly was inspiring to see Jesus' final hours depicted in such an engaging and powerful outdoor show.



## THE CRUCIBLE

This year's Performing Arts production was *The Crucible*. Based on the Salem witch trials, Arthur Miller's masterpiece remains one of the most powerful and thrilling plays of our time. One of the primary reasons this play was chosen were for the themes that run through it – justice, fear and power. Everything is literally life and death in the show and it is much more than just witchcraft.

With a large student cast of over 20 performers, inventive design and an original soundtrack,

*The Crucible* truly was a timely re-examining of the dangers of a culture of scapegoating.

Performances were held in the Valda Ward Auditorium on 26 - 29 July 2017, where each show was greeted with a full audience.

It truly was a stirring, powerful, dark and haunting story that was told through dramatic performance, and the students and staff involved did an excellent job of portraying this unique story to the audience. The realism of

the performance brought tears to the eyes of some members of the audience, and we were delighted to welcome numerous other Ballarat schools, who were studying *The Crucible* as part of their English studies.

Well done to Director Mr Andrew Seear and all involved.

# SPEED DATE A SCIENTIST EVENT

## DAMASCUS ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH TEAM

As part of the Damascus Energy Breakthrough Team, students are constructing three vehicles this year, in readiness for the RACV Energy Breakthrough event in Maryborough in November.

Mark McLean, Energy Breakthrough Coordinator said that we are excited to launch these vehicles, the first being an electric vehicle powered by a 750 Watt motor.

"It uses a 36 volt, lead acid battery pack that is good for about 40 km or more of racing, (depending on how efficiently the vehicle is driven). It is capable of high speeds but has been limited to 65Km/hr due to the race track speed limit at Maryborough," he said.

This year the students have come up with a theme of names for the three entries. The one pictured below is named "Sherlock Ohms", the pedal powered, electric assist vehicle will be named Dr Watt son, and the third vehicle will be powered by human energy alone - only pedals - "Moriarty".

The students have accumulated more than 900 hours of workshop time in the development of the team's vehicles, with hundreds of parent hours that could be added to this tally.

"We are exceptionally proud of all the hard work the students, staff and parents have put in to building our first of three EBT vehicles for this year."



On Monday 8th May, all Year 9 students had the opportunity to take part in the annual 'Speed date a Scientist' event at Damascus College. Now in its seventh year, this event promotes careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) amongst the student body.

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 took part in a speed date with six to eight scientists for 10 to 15 minutes each, before rotating to another guest speaker.

Ivanka Saric, Science Learning Area Leader said that this event exposes students to careers in Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics and Psychology. "It was a great opportunity to introduce these disciplines to students in Year 9 so that they could consider these subjects when heading in to 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 is contagious and the students walk away with a greater understanding and appreciation for these career options."

We welcomed speakers who are Nurses, Exercise Physiologists, Architects, Engineers, Midwives, Environmental Scientists, Geologists, Physiotherapists, Clinical Psychologists, Health Researchers, Astronomers, Meteorologists, Physicists, Pharmacists, Podiatrists and students who are studying at Deakin University and Federation University.



# CAITLYN PITCHER GETS PUBLISHED IN TEEN MAGAZINE

Year 11 student Caitlyn Pitcher has, this year, had her illustration and article published in the 'Exploring Teens' magazine, in the May-July edition which was published in early May 2017.

Exploring Teens is Australia's only magazine aimed at helping parents of teenagers, arming them with what they need to know about the well-being of adolescents. Articles cover communication, teen health – mental and physical, work, finance and much more.

Caitlyn said that she is very crafty and thought that this particular magazine suited her ideally as it is about adolescents with different needs, including learning difficulties.

"I also thought that it was a good way to spread my artistic talent around Australia," she said.

"Art is something I have had since I was a little kid, and I have been working at my talent since I was little, trying to expand my art knowledge by trying different mediums, but my favourite is using greylead."

Caitlyn's article is titled 'Struggling to understand – A Teen's Take' and her accompanying illustration focuses on all the words and emotions involved with exams. Caitlyn writes her personal story, and of her own struggles with learning, it is a brilliant first person narrative that provides the parent readers with an incredibly privileged view into her world.

Caitlyn writes that her life drastically improved when she started at Damascus. She now has friends all over the school and all over Ballarat which is fantastic. She now believes in herself as a leader and loves helping people, and is very keen to make a difference in the world.

Caitlyn's favourite subject at Damascus College is the Hospitality VETIS course, where she is studying a Certificate II in Kitchen Operations, this will help her achieve her dream of becoming a chef after secondary school.



## BLAST FROM THE PAST BOARDING HOUSE BLUES

2017 marks 50 years of education at our beautiful Mount Clear site, and the first students to take up residence here were the Matriculation boarders of 1967.

According to Mother Bonaventure when planning for the new school in 1964 "the most important thing about the new school, is that it will still be the old school," but the first residents of St. Martin's appeared to feel a little differently. These first boarders were considered by the Pioneer Sisters of St. Martin's to be "a new generation, pouring out of the fine new study halls to the freedom of the Fanning acres, a whole horizon of blue hills around them and winds blowing them the scent of the bush". It is perhaps easy to understand this new feeling of freedom when we think of the brick walls of Victoria Street, already bursting at the seams prior to 1960.

Get any group of boarders together and the stories quickly emerge. The girls of 1967 who thought the meals in the dining room were "as good as the ones at home!" or the night in 1977 when the second floor was so quiet you would have almost thought there wasn't anyone there... Perhaps it is only fitting that the final say goes to Sr Marie Davey. What many of us don't realise is that Sr Marie had a particular insight into the mind of a boarder – her mother Mattie Walsh survived the Sacred Heart College boarding school in 1919. Sr Marie remembers with fondness the story her mother told of running away from the boarding house and walking all the way home one night – it was her birthday and she didn't feel it had been recognized with the appropriate amount of fanfare! Her Dad took pity on her for that night, but she was returned to school promptly the next morning. Although boarders are a thing of the past now for Damascus College, the memories linger long.

NATASHA ADAM  
Archivist





Brooke Hutchinson receives her award

## BROOKE HUTCHINSON RECEIVES PREMIER'S VCE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY

Damascus College student Brooke Hutchinson received top honours in May 2017 for her outstanding VCE results in 2016.

Brooke was presented with a Premier's VCE award for excellence in Food and Technology, making her one of the top Food and Technology students in the state.

Brooke said that it was a surreal experience being invited to attend the award ceremony at the opulent Palladium at Crown Casino, and being sat amongst the highest achievers for Victoria's class of 2016 was not intimidating as much as it was humbling to know that my tireless work was being recognised and celebrated alongside them.

"I was in awe of the remarkable young people who filled the room, all of whom had triumphed in their studies. Many of the awards were presented to those who excelled in either Language, Mathematics or Science subjects, but very few for areas like Food Tech. Just because it's perceived as a 'bludge' doesn't make it any easier to succeed in, but the fact that I beat the odds made me even prouder of what I accomplished.

Hearing from numerous All-Rounders (aka those who achieved 46+ in five or more subjects) made

me feel immensely gratified to be a part of a generation who want to proactively make the world a better, more peaceful place," she said.

Brooke was studying a Bachelor of Arts, International Studies at RMIT University. However, after 4 weeks, she decided to leave her university studies, instead opting to travel and explore her various other options before re-settling into further education.

"The most difficult aspect of Year 12 was not the SACs or the prospect of exams, it was staying motivated until the end. Exam time was especially hard because suddenly I had so much spare time at home. The 'difficult' choice between television and revising was always biased."

"To say I was lucky in not only Year 12 but throughout my entire time at Damascus is an enormous understatement. It was the greatest privilege to have teachers who were always encouraging me but also challenging me to see things from a different perspective. Some of the greatest life lessons that I stand by today were those that I learnt at high school."

"Jenny Kinghorn, my Food Tech Teacher, was never just a teacher but a wonderful friend and someone who went beyond the realm of simply

relaying the textbook. She taught me a lot more than just cooking techniques, with her endlessly preaching the necessity of embracing who you are, this is one of my fondest memories from Food class."

Matthew Byrne, Damascus College Principal said the entire school community is extremely proud of Brooke.

"Brooke is a passionate and committed individual, and she worked extremely hard throughout her six years at Damascus, so much so that she received an academic award in every year of her secondary schooling. A true testament to her hard work and determination is that we also celebrated Brooke's achievement as the Damascus College dux in 2016" he said.

More than 250 of Victoria's best and brightest students were recognised at this year's Premier's VCE Awards ceremony.

# STUDENTS REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA THIS YEAR



ALYSSA BRITTEN, YEAR 11  
Australian Women's Team for Futsal.



HARRY GRAHAM,  
YEAR 12  
Australian Representative  
2017 Trans-Tasman  
Ultimate Frisbee  
Championship U18  
Test Series Australia  
v New Zealand





**CRAIG HAGAN,  
YEAR 12**

Australian  
Representative 2017  
World Dragon Boating  
Championships,  
Divonne-Les-Bains,  
France.



**SAM RIZZO, YEAR 11**

Won a silver and three bronze medals at the 2017 World Para-athletics Junior Championships in Nottwil, Switzerland. Sam was also the Australian flag bearer at the event. He is also the Australian record holder for Under 18 Mens 800m.





## GUEST SPEAKER NATHAN HULLS



Nathan Hulls, Guest Speaker

This year's annual Guest Speaker was Nathan Hulls, one of Australia's leading Youth Motivational Speakers who specialises in training and development for students and adults in the areas of performance psychology, accelerated learning, motivation and engagement.

On Wednesday 24 May Nathan spoke to the whole student population on the topic 'Decide Your Own Destiny,' giving students a rare insight in to his life's journey; being born with a disability, where he was faced with teasing, bullying and the heartache of losing his mum at a young age, throughout all of these life challenges, he chose to rise above the 'stuff' to choose his own adventure and create his own future.

He then presented to the staff body on the topic "The Happiness Effect in the Classroom,' sharing his insights into how success doesn't create happiness, but happiness plays a huge role in the success of our education, lifestyle and relationships. He went on to talk about emotional well-being, the four pillars of social and emotional intelligence, ten healthy habits of happiness, and how to create an environment for students to thrive.

387 parents, guardians and community members gathered to hear Nathan present on 'How to create a culture of motivation and engagement for teens.'" In his presentation he presented on not only WHY teens behave the way they do, but HOW to engage, motivate and communicate with them in an effective and empowering way. Attendees discovered the six core needs of young people, three primal fears, three subconscious questions all young people are asking parents and the seven keys to creating a culture of engagement, motivation and resilience for teens.

We thank Nathan for the time he spent with our Damascus community and we trust students, staff and parents benefited from each presentation.

## MOTHER'S DAY AND FATHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

This year we saw record high attendance numbers at the annual Mother's and Father's Day Liturgy and Breakfast events. We welcomed 125 on Mother's Day and 160 attendees on Father's Day. Both events were a lovely celebration of the significant people in our lives, and we thank our Damascus community for attending and celebrating these occasions with your young people.



## DAMASCUS DAY

On Thursday 20 September 2017, the Damascus community celebrated Damascus Day. Celebrations commenced at 10.30am with a whole of school Mass in the John Shannon Centre, presided by Fr Justin Driscoll, this Mass was a major liturgical event and was a very moving and special feature of the day. The Damascus Day Mass is one of the major ways in which we show our identity as a College in the Roman Catholic tradition. This year we returned to focus on the College motto, 'To Live by the Light of Christ' and at Teacher Advisor groups, all students were asked to consider what this means for us in 2017.

Students and staff commenced festival celebrations at 1pm to the theme 'Around the world', where students and staff were invited to dress up in the theme.

Students were issued with a passport that indicated all of the continents they needed to visit throughout the festival. There were five continents in total, Asia, Africa, Australia, America and Europe and each was host to a number of exciting activities. Students had to complete at least one activity to get their passport stamped, and once they received five stamps, they went in the draw to win one of three hampers.

All activities were free and students were encouraged to take part in as many as they could, activities included:

Departure Lounge:

Coffee van, Chip on a stick, Fairy floss, Popcorn, Donut van, Boost van, Giant slide, Movie in auditorium.

Asia:

Damascus mural, Relax wellbeing station, Food eating record attempt, Climbing wall.

Africa:

Just Dance, Karaoke Sing star, Mario Kart, Photo booth.

America:

How far can you row, Minute to win it activities, Paper plane competition, Face paint stall.

Australia:

Egg/spoon race, Sack race, 3 legged race, Enviro challenge.

Europe:

Petting zoo, Zumba, Make a balloon animal, Footy Kicking Competition.

## ALUMNI STORY

# REDEFINING SUCCESS



Tessa Marshall as Snow White in 'Alice in Wonderland', Creswick Theatre Company

My name is Tessa Marshall, a born and mainly bred Ballarat girl. I completed my VCE at Damascus College in 2009, after starting Year 7 in 2004 at the Victoria Street campus. I would like to share with you some aspects of my life. This includes some history of my earlier years growing up; my thoughts about my time at Damascus as well as some post-secondary schooling experiences which I have found quite difficult at times.

I feel it is important to alert current students and their parents/carers of some of the challenges they may confront either individually, or as part of a family unit, on exiting secondary schooling. Specifically I refer to the pursuit of gaining meaningful employment; just so they know that they aren't necessarily the only ones who may feel inadequate or lacking in self-worth; as we exist in this rapidly changing technological time as we do.

Although I was born in Ballarat, I did spend approximately six years living in Northern New South Wales, at Banora Point, which is situated just south of Tweed Heads on the NSW and Queensland state's border.

I very much enjoyed jazz and tap dance lessons which I began in Banora Point. We were members of the Twin Towns Services Club and I have great memories of attending

many concerts at Twin Towns, and I believe this strongly influenced my interest and eagerness to one day be a performer myself.

Then we moved back to 'good old Ballarat' to be closer to family; but I shall never forget experiencing the tropical weather that the northern part of coastal NSW is renowned for.

I have generally fond memories of my time at Damascus, especially the Performing Arts area, which has always been a great passion of mine. During my time at Damascus I was involved in my first stage school musical; appearing as a 'Who' in the musical 'Seussical the Musical', and as a Munchkin in 'The Wiz'. I also joined in with the school choir and afterschool jazz and funk dance classes, and performed in Showcases, mainly singing.

After finishing my schooling at Damascus College, in the following year of 2010, I completed a Certificate 4 in Theatre Arts at the SMB campus of what was then known as the University of Ballarat. During the course I gained further experience in acting and having to think on my feet during improvisation exercises. I also developed skills in costume and prop making, basic sound, lighting and radio inductions and even constructed and learnt how to walk on stilts! I also appeared in Ballarat Lyric Theatre's production of 'A Hot August Night in Ballarat', as a backing singer; held at the Wendouree Centre for Performing Arts during that year.

I decided in 2011 to further my education and I went in a new direction, opting to study a Bachelor of Science (B Sc) at the University of Ballarat. This was quite a contrast from wanting to study a Bachelor of Music Theatre! I had been intent on gaining entry to this course, but I was unsuccessful in my numerous applications over some years to this very competitive course.

In hindsight this was the start of a wake-up call to my younger, naive self. I had 'put all my eggs into one basket' mainly focusing on this pursuit. As my father tried to point out to me; a consequence of my singled minded focus was that I most likely missed opportunities in other fields! But being younger I just couldn't see that; or was it partly that I didn't wish to?

The fact is, and this is some of my advice to current students, that it pays to have a back-up plan or a few, because not everything is going to go the way you want it to go. That's just life, and it's not necessarily that what you want immediately won't ever work out; it may or may not? Certainly keep aspiring, but temper that with life's reality; and do take the time and give due consideration to the views of your parent's, trusted friends or others.

I have successfully obtained my B Sc from UB and despite having done some work in the hospitality industry; I have found it extremely difficult in gaining employment per se – not just in the areas of my studies. The countless job applications that I have submitted; often without receiving an acknowledgement of same, let alone an interview, does not increase one's self esteem! Sometimes it makes me feel deterred but the key is to keep doing something, just keep on believing, that one day 'I will get to where I want to'.

I have felt disheartened, anxious and even depressed about my inability to find meaningful employment. The reality is that youth unemployment overall is very high, and this is even more so in regional and country areas, such as Ballarat.

My story therefore is not one of great achievement thus far. Presently I don't consider myself a Damascus success – well at least in employment terms. But my story needs to be, and should be told. For to ignore it and present to all the College's current students only the

stories of past students who have 'succeeded'; may give them a false impression of what life can be like after finishing school.

I want current students to understand that if they find themselves in a similar situation to what I have experienced; that they are not alone and especially that they are not failures. That it is important for them to gather good people around them to advise and support them through any difficult times they encounter.

I should like to also tell them to 'keep the faith', to maintain hope and to continue to aspire to what they want. I'm a true believer that whatever is meant to happen will happen, but in its own time and own way.

I am currently doing some volunteer work at Voice FM and loving it. I have just started up volunteer work as an advocate with Australian Unemployed Workers Union (as you could imagine, an area I am greatly passionate about). I do my volunteer work at the RSPCA Pet's Place also; and importantly I continue my involvement in theatre; singing, acting and dancing. I have been particularly involved with Creswick Theatre Company having played such roles as Snow White, Alice in Alice In Wonderland and Queen Titania in A Midsummer Night's Dream musical version to name a few shows. Life as we all know could be much, much worse!

**TESSA MARSHALL**  
Class of 2009



## ALUMNI STORY MY BELOVED MOTHER

Molly Harris nee O'Shea (Class of 1940) had memories of Sacred Heart College and the Mercy Sisters that stretched back through time into the 19th Century with the stories her mother wove of her own experiences as a newly minted school girl in the late 1800s. It was there at Sacred Heart that a strong love and commitment to the Mercy ethos was born and cultivated across three generations. At times the support went both ways with my grandfather, James O'Shea, a butcher at Heinz's, providing much needed rations during the Great Depression and the Second World War and the Sisters, for their part, providing a rich and comprehensive education to the women of our family, not only providing the secular tools we needed to navigate through life but steeping us in a reflective and practical spirituality, developing a strong sense of social justice and dedication to help and support others that became a part of the very fabric of my mother's being.

Not one for bells and whistles, Mum quietly conducted her life with ordinary, yet extraordinary, decency and kindness. As a single woman she worked as a telephonist but, in keeping with the times, gave this up at my father John's request when she became a devoted mother to my brother Peter and to me. In later life my father thought this had been a mistake as Mum would like to have done paid work. She kept herself busy, however, by tirelessly volunteering for the SHC Old Collegians, for the school canteen, Lisa Lodge, St Pat's College and community groups such as her beloved bowling club, typically taking on long stints as President or

Treasurer. Mum understood about community, about contributing. She had learnt through her formative years that the best of life was to be found in joining actively with others, in simply getting on with it and doing what was needed to make people's lives better.

Although she grew into an incredibly capable woman, adept at organizing and getting things done, she pretty much hated school. She was the only prep student when she was enrolled at SHC in 1929 and stayed until she was 17. Although I marvel at the variety of experiences she was offered, learning violin, piano to A.Mus.A. level, fencing and languages to name a few, most of it left her cold. In fact, the word 'cold' often featured in her recounting and as a boarder for a year at 16, she spoke of chilblains, horrible food and terrifying nuns. Sorting through the cupboards at our family home when a nursing home loomed, I came across an ancient, home-style 'Last Anointing kit', housed in a now tattered, black cloth box which, Mum informed me matter-of-factly, she'd won in a raffle at the school as a child. How exciting that must have been for her 10-year-old self! How handy to be able to whip out a Last Rites kit at need! They were certainly different times and evocative of an era and type of faith long gone.

Any misgivings about her own schooling didn't stop her from sending her own daughter there or in believing in the basic precepts she'd learnt. Mum came to realise the value of what she'd received, almost despite herself. The depth of her profound faith was grounded here,



Molly with family



Molly Harris at Bowls Club

she could accommodate and understand the vagaries of human nature, the complexity and the duality of people's actions over their words at times. The fact that her mother, Molly McManamny, had been to school with Sr Peter Damien and others charged with teaching us, did save Mum, her sister, Kath and later me and my cousins a bit of grief I think and led to glimpses of the hearts beating under the habits. Sr Damien, a clever woman, no doubt frustrated beyond belief with her charges at times, had the misfortune of teaching two generations of us French. Though she could pin you to the back wall with one withering glance, you did learn your French and she could also be extremely gentle when you were sick and upset – I thank my lucky stars for her schoolgirl friendship with my Grandmother for that particular mercy though! For my part I grew up being hailed as "Molly, Kath, Jenny, Louise, Frances" as the older sisters listed of my mother, aunt and elder cousins before they remembered my name. Hard to beat this sense of being known, or being placed in context when growing up!

Although my mother's connection to the Mercy Sisters was already deep and rich, it was to be further intertwined with my discovery at the age of 36 that my birth aunts, Sr Veronica Lawson and Thérèse Lawson, had gone to Sacred Heart as well, with Veronica going on to enter the convent, ending up as my Principal at St. Martins in the Pines in my final year and leading the congregation for a time (2005-11). Thus, our family came together again under the traditions and the embrace of the Sisters of Mercy easing,

with shared understandings and experiences, the expansion of two families into one whole.

To the end of her long life, Mum was profoundly grateful for the education and influence of the Mercy Sisters in her life. They had formed an active backdrop to her faith, thinking and experiences and were still among her most constant and welcomed visitors throughout the last few years of her life.

Molly Harris led a good and decent life, a life those Mercy Sisters who guided her through her early years could be proud of. I know we are.

Vale Molly

Beautiful woman.

You are missed beyond measure.

BY MOLLY'S DAUGHTER, FRANCES HARRIS  
Class of 1977

## ALUMNI STORY

# KEEPING HER EYE ON THE BALL

I completed year 12 in 2000. I'm originally from Lexton and now live in Mt Clear. After completing year 12, I spent a year living in Ocean Grove with two of my sisters and worked at the Barwon Heads Hotel.

I moved back to Ballarat at the beginning of 2002 and got myself a job at the Red Lion Hotel where I worked as Administration Manager for 14 years. It was at the Red Lion where I met my husband Paul Roberts who was Operations manager for the Hotel for 16 years.

Paul and I got married in 2006 and had our first child in 2015, a son Brooklyn. In 2016 we had a daughter, Harper.

In between having Brooklyn and Harper I continued to do the bookwork for the Red Lion Hotel. In late 2015 Paul and myself decided to open our own Café in the Midvale shopping complex called Espresso District.

My favourite subjects at School were Home Eco (food), Maths and Business Management. I believe these subjects have contributed to the success of opening our own business and certainly the years of experience at the Red Lion Hotel no doubt gave us the confidence to do so. We both have a very good work ethic and understanding of what it was going to take to run a successful business.

Espresso District opened late in 2015 and has been a huge success. In the beginning I worked in the kitchen cooking breakfasts, doing all the baking and training up kitchen staff so that I could finish up prior to having Harper.

I now continue to do the bookwork, the shopping and a little bit of baking. Paul is the face of the café and has developed great relationships within the community of Mt Clear and its surrounds. He attended Mt Clear Secondary College and grew up in the area. All schools around the area including Damascus College have been a great support to us, using us for a number of things including catering, breakfast meetings and simply somewhere to meet for coffee, breakfast or lunch.

It's not only the teachers that support us, but students and parents as well. Although a lot of time and effort goes into running a business, Paul and I still ensure we both spend a lot of time with our children, take family holidays and do things we enjoy.



Kimberly Roberts with husband Paul Roberts and family

Netball is a big part of my life, having played my whole life for Lexton. I have nearly reached 400 games for the club, and earned myself a life membership a few years ago after dedicating and volunteering a lot of time to the club as a committee member and years of coaching. There have been several girls who attended Damascus that have played for Lexton and still do. Netball has been so important to me over the years as I have made so many friendship and I like to think it keeps me healthy (mind and body!). Recently I was lucky enough to win my fifth premiership.

I am from a large family having three older brothers and three older sisters. My sisters attended Damascus/Sacred Heart/St Martins. Each of them has also had success after attending the College. Kelly, a year older than me has five children and runs two businesses with her husband in Ballarat, a fencing business and a cleaning business. My sister Nicole lives down the coast, has two children and works for Barwon Health, her husband runs a flooring business in Geelong. My eldest sister Jackie has four children and runs a personal training and nutritional business in Mt Helen/Buninyong. Jackie's two oldest children currently attend Damascus, she is also supported by the school in her business from clients to the use of school grounds for her fitness sessions.

I still keep in touch with a few friends & often run into people around Ballarat that I attended school with. One of my favourite memories from Damascus was year 10 Outward Bound where we spent 10 nights camping in the Grampians with a small bunch of students.

If there is any advice that I can give to a student starting year 7, it would be to enjoy your time, make lots of friends, work hard on the subjects you enjoy and soak up as much information as you can as you never know how it may help with skills after school.

**KIMBERLY ROBERTS NEE SMITH**  
Class of 2000



# REUNIONS

## CLASS OF 1977 40 YEAR REUNION

The Class of 1977 40 Year Reunion was held on Saturday 29 April, 2017.

When a date was set for the 1977 reunion it was hard to believe that it had been forty years since our year group graced the grounds of St Martins' in the Pines/Sacred Heart College. A group of us decided to gather together to ensure that as many past students as possible would be contacted and invited to attend.

Discussions were held over dinners and a few rounds of local cafes and a list of names emerged that ended up having over 170 past students who went through Sacred Heart College and St Martins in the Pines and would have graduated Year 12 in 1977. Contacting people in the digital era is quicker and a bit easier than in the past and we managed to contact many of the ladies on the list. From there, the message spread, and not just around Ballarat but internationally as well, as ladies made contact from around Australia and overseas.

An afternoon was arranged by Damascus College for us all to meet at the school, share afternoon tea and then tour the school. The boarders, in particular, were keen to reminisce and see what changes had been made over the last four decades. The school looks amazing. Whilst the original buildings still look similar on the outside, the insides are completely different. No more wooden lockers or heaters running along the window ledges, no more dormitories or dining rooms. The school and its surrounds are beautiful and a credit to the current staff and students.

We arranged an evening function at the Red Lion Hotel and were joined by some more ladies who weren't able to make the afternoon event. Lots of photos and memorabilia were on display and a big thank you to everyone who



Class of 1977 Reunion

contributed books, photos, magazines. Catching up on forty years involved lots of laughter and noise and hopefully we can keep the contact going. Thanks also, to those who travelled from around the country to attend.

We were particularly moved to reflect on the students that were now our "angels" with ten girls remembered in a memorial presentation. Where we had local contact details, the photos and flowers from the display were taken and given to family members after the event. Without exception they were extremely moved that their daughters/sisters were remembered as a big part of our group.

We hope to keep the contact going. There is a group that meet up for dinner in Ballarat once a month and if anyone would like more details, please check the 1977 Reunion Facebook Group or contact the school for contact details.

ANNE ALEXANDER NEE SEGRAVE  
Class of 1977

*Please Note: List may be incomplete. Not everyone who attended provided registration information.*

*In attendance were: Jan Godfrey, Michelle Hickey, Clare Nunan, Debbie Ryle, Mandy Sherritt, Roselyn Helyar, Elizabeth Ludbrook, Sr Anne Forbes, Sr Veronica Lawson, Jenny Daffy, Fiona Shannon, Lisa Watts, Felicity Morcom, Bernadette Cullinan, Joyce Banks, Bernadette Ruyg, Maureen Pearce, Leanne Brasier, Moira Jordan, Anne Segrave, Kathy Rea, Leanne Shannon, Mirjana Macola, Marie Ferguson, Bernadette Brady, Jan Elliott, Cathy Clifton, Marita Murphy, Debbie White, Gayle Hogan, Helen Dooley, Angela Bourke, Christine Hickson nee Parkin, Ann O'Brien, Francis Harris, Maria Kelly, Sue Frawley, Jane Maher, Mary Ann Morgan, Julie Clifford, Jenny Walsh, Rosa Tocchet, Maree Heaney, Kerryn Barnes.*

## CLASS OF 1987 30 YEAR REUNION

The Class of 1987 30 Year Reunion was held on Friday 19 May, 2017.

Over 40 former students (day scholars and boarders) began the evening at the welcome reception hosted in the Mercy Wing Boardroom at Damascus College. While enjoying drinks and nibbles we had an opportunity to mingle and catch up. Many faces were very familiar, but it was great to have name tags to help with remembering those that weren't immediately recalled.

Highlights of our time together were reminisced. The infamous Outward Bound, where real friendships were forged as we huddled under sheets of plastic in the rain existing on banana pudding and Ryvita crackers (never to be eaten again), comrades in our misery. Yet we all agreed an experience we would never give up.

The production of Godspell, bus rides into town on a Friday night and formals with St. Pats. Past staff members were recalled with great affection and fondness and the night was a wonderful opportunity for us to come together and share our memories.

As past students it was an extra special night as we were joined by Karen Simpkin (many of us had her as a teacher at Sacred Heart) and Gordon Shaw (a favourite for many at St Martin's). Additional staff from Damascus College were on hand to welcome us back and to take us on a guided tour. The campus tour was a real trip down memory lane. For the past students who were boarders it was a chance to see the old dormitory and relive and retell many familiar tales. It was a delight to hear one girl start the yarn and have many others chime in as it continued.

After leaving the Damascus campus we continued our celebrations at the Freight Bar, and have been incredibly active on our Facebook Group page. So many pictures have been posted and memories shared that it is a joy to continue going back to see them again and read new comments that have been posted.

**KORINA HEGERT**  
Class of 1987

*Please Note: List may be incomplete. Not everyone who attended provided registration information.*

*In attendance were: Suzanne Abrahams, Josie Armao, Josephine Camilleri, Clare Capon, Catherine Casserly, Leanne Daldy, Silvana Danielis, Tina de Vos, Tania Dejong, Sally Dooley, Jacinta Duffy, Louise Dunn, Caroline Elderfield, Angela Gorman, Korina Hegert, Sharon Hill, Alexandra Hiller, Megan Howarth, Helen Jaensch, Janelle Johnson, Vanessa Kalamistrakis, Michelle Knaap, Suzie Maher, Di Meade, Nadine Mulholland, Cristina Neri, Claire O'Halloran, Mandy Potter, Sarah Ross, Fiona Torpy, Sue van de Ven, Sarah van Gerrevink, Wendy Van Hoos, Helen Walker, Linda Wood.*





Class of 1997 Reunion

## CLASS OF 1997 20 YEAR REUNION

The invitation came sooner than I was expecting. Twenty years!? I had a hard time explaining to my children what life was like in the 1990s: no iPads, no SMARTboards, and no mobile phones. Rather slow and cumbersome computers, dusty blackboards, and written notes passed to each other during and after class.

Times had changed.

For the majority of us, it had been nearly 20 years since we stepped foot on Damascus soil. Some of us had driven past and witnessed its physical expansion, but that was the extent of it. And yet, all of a sudden, there we were, walking the grounds once again. The class of 1997 20 year reunion was held on Friday 28 April, 2017.

Some of us arrived late or left early to meet family or work commitments. Some faces were easily recognised while others required a second glance. There were those who were reconnecting after years spent overseas or interstate, and there were those whose high school relationships had held strong against time.

The tour of the school was impressive. New spaces had evolved to allow for new learning styles. The familiar parts felt smaller than what most of us remembered, but they were still rich in memories: cramming for exams, catching up on weekend gossip, competing in (or supporting) sporting events, eating lunch while planning our social calendars, celebrating completion of assignments, and playing 'stacks on' in the Common Room.

After the school tour, we headed to the Ivy Room at The Provincial. Drinks and conversation flowed. We re-lived embarrassing stories, we filled in the gaps from over the years, and we shared a collective sense of relief that our high school years predated Facebook.

We also reflected on some sadder moments from the years, and donated money from ticket sales to the "Giving Gold for Lou" (previously known as the Lou Quinn Ovarian Cancer Fund) in honour of our friend and classmate Louise Quinn.

Once again, time flew by. The Ivy Room closed and celebrations moved to The George. For me, the night ended shortly after. I could no longer pretend I was still 18 and found myself craving a warm bed and a stretchy waist band.

Thank you to those who came, those who helped organise, and those who could not attend but still sent through photos and memories. And thank you to Damascus College. Not just for the educational opportunities, but for the memories, the life lessons, and the friendships.

**COURTNEY SKONTRA  
NEE JONES**  
Class of 1997

*Please Note: List may be incomplete. Not everyone who attended provided registration information.*

*In attendance were: Julia Ackland, Julian Allan, Jen Bevelander, Karen Cahir, Olivia Cleary, Rebecca Djordjevic, Matt Edgar, Laura Edgcumbe, Shane Edwards, Liz Gibson, Andrea Lenaghan, Tim Leonard, Ryan Maher, Rod McDonald, Trinity Anne Meager, Nathan Mullane, Steven O'Donnell, Sarah Prendergast, Dean Romeril, Clinton Ruyg, David Sandwith, Dom Santamaria, Simone Segrave, Courtney Skontra, Jeremy Stevens, Santina Trigazis, Felicity Trigg, Dan West, Justin Weyers, Amie Whelan and Yasmin Wills.*



## CLASS OF 2007 10 YEAR REUNION

Class of 2007 School Captain Ben Knight stepped into the role of party planner and event organiser for the Damascus College 10 year reunion, which was held on Friday 5 May, 2017.

Through the power of social media all of the class was contacted in one way or another, and over 60 members of the class of 2007 gathered to celebrate their reunion.

The evening commenced at the Damascus College Mt Clear campus at 6pm. Drinks and nibbles were provided by the school and after the former students had mingled and caught up, they were taken on a guided tour of the campus. A lot had changed in just 10 years as the College has experienced significant growth in that time.

In addition to the mixing and tour of the College the reunion event included an after party. The venue selected was Freight Bar and Restaurant on Mair Street. Live music, great food and drinks were enjoyed as more stories were told, memories relived and friendships rekindled.

*Please Note: List may be incomplete. Not everyone who attended provided registration information.*

*In attendance were: Trudi Armstrong, Amber Armstrong, John Bath, Tiarni Beasley, Craig Belsar, Jess Bennetts, Alison Booth, David Broadway, Michael Brundell, Nicole Burvill, Hannah Bylsma, Jake Bylsma, Kelly Campbell, Airleigh Clark, Sarah Crane, Jason Crosbie, Lauren Curtis, Brenton Cvirm, Zac David, Tyler Dittloff, Sarah Dohnt, Kelsie George, Tyler Giles, Olga Gullock, Joshua Handreck, Kit Hanson, Jayde Holloway, Jessica Hughes, Claire Jones, Jacob Jones, Hannah Keating, Brigitte Kelly, Ben Knight, Joel Kochskamper, Kim Langan, Georgia Lannen, Matthew McCluskey, Joel McLean, Ashlee Milne, Jessica Mitchell, Chris Morphett, Harry Patterson, Stacey Payne, Matt Ringin, Shannon Ryan, Katie Sanford, Emma Schreenan, Matthew Sculley, Justin Smith, Jasmine Warden, Emma Werndly, Kaitlin Witham.*

## 2018 REUNIONS

Reunions scheduled for 2018 are currently set for the following years; 1978, 1988, 1998 and 2008. In 2018 we will also be supporting a St Paul's (all year) reunion. If you are a member of another cohort and interested in holding a reunion in 2018 please contact Korina Hegert, the Alumni Officer at the College so that she can assist [connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:connecting@damascus.vic.edu.au) or (03) 5337 2222.

It is our aim to have as many of your exit year group as possible attend and participate in your reunion event. This includes those students who may have left at other times but identify best with this year group. 2018 reunion dates will be finalised before the end of the year. They will be posted on the Damascus website as well as the Alumni Facebook Group page.

As a past student or staff member of Damascus College, or any of the foundation schools (Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines), we invite you to provide your contact details by visiting [www.damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-keeping-in-touch](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au/past-students-keeping-in-touch) and submitting the completed form.

Providing us with your contact information ensures that we can:

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

Another great way to stay in contact is on Facebook. Join the Damascus College Alumni Group.



Milan Sanders (Class of 2011)



Dr. Sandra Harvey, Class of 1973 with her daughter Kate



Joel Richards (Class of 2016)



Shelby Sherritt (Class of 2013)

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**JOHN MAHER** (Class of 1965) continues his work as a public speaker/advocate for road safety. John is a very engaging and entertaining speaker who educates on the very real and personal tragedy of road fatigue. Carmen (the youngest of his four daughter's) died at just 18, after she fell asleep at the wheel of her car, ran off the road at 100km/h and struck a tree.

**DR SANDRA HARVEY** nee Hegert (Class of 1973) will be returning to Ballarat in January 2018 as the newly appointed Assistant Director: System Improvement for the Catholic Education Office Ballarat.

**ISABELLA FELS** (Class of 1990) is a Melbourne based poet and writer. She has been published in various publications including Positive Words, The Big Issue and The Record.

**JORDAN ROUGHEAD** (Class of 2008) ruckman for the Western Bulldogs, was nominated for the Jim Stynes Community Leadership Award for his outstanding contribution to Ladder, the youth homelessness charity supported by the AFL Players' Association. The prestigious award, gives \$40,000 for a chosen charity or community program that is championed by a player.

**EMILY MATHEWS** (Class of 2010) undertook a three-month stay on Bush Heritage's Boolcoomatta Reserve in South Australia observing the impact of feral cats on our native flora and fauna.

**MILAN SAUNDERS** (Class of 2011) was crowned one of five winners of the 2017 Dulcie Stone Writer's Competition for people who have intellectual disabilities with his entry, 'Spectrum of Confusion'. It talks about the feeling of constant confusion and what it means to Milan as someone on the Autism Spectrum. The award was presented on July 31st, hosted by VALID Inc & Writers Victoria.

**SHELBY SHERRITT** (Class of 2013) embarked on a 7900-kilometre journey to Nepal, where she along with 30 other volunteers helped fight the scourge of human trafficking, while rebuilding communities for the earthquake-ravaged nation. Shelby was able to go after winning a scholarship through Aussie Action Abroad, a charity that aims to help communities achieve sustainable outcomes.

Congratulations to **BIANCA LITCHFIELD** (Class of 2015) who won a silver medal in the Open Club Women's 8 with the Banks Rowing Club, at this year's Rowing Nationals in Sydney.

**BROOKE HUTCHINSON** (Class of 2016) was presented with her high achievers award in April at Crown Casino. The top three students in each study received awards. Brooke was amongst 280 + students state-wide. Brooke has decided to do something in the Food area at William Angliss next year and at present she's travelling in South America.

**GRACE NICHOLS** (Class of 2016) has spent time living and working in Saint Vincent de Tyrosee, a very small French town close to the Spanish border. Upon her return to Australia Grace has been accepted for a primary and secondary teaching course at Monash University. It is her intention to also study French.

**JOEL RICHARDS** (Class of 2016) was named the 2016 Australian Army Cadet. This is a national award. Congratulations Joel.

## BIRTHS

REBECCA GARLICK nee Wiseman (Class of 1999) and husband Dean would like to announce the birth of their daughter Charlotte Jade. She was born August 11, 2017.

Former school captain DAMIAN FOSTER (Class of 2003) and his partner Cathy Milner welcomed their son Finley Kenneth Foster to their family earlier this year.

## MARRIAGES

BETHANY THOMAS nee Gorton (class of 2007) was married on June 3 2017 at Cleveland Estate Winery in Lancefield to Christopher Thomas.



Bethany and Christopher Thomas (Class of 2007)



Finley Foster, son of Damian Foster (Class of 2003)

## IN MEMORY



### VALE JOYCE 'JOY' FOGARTY

died on 25 December, 2016. Joy commenced work as a kitchenhand at Sacred Heart Convent, Ballarat East in the early 1970's. At this time Sacred Heart was a thriving community of nuns, boarding and day students. In 1972 Joy moved out to the St Martin's kitchen and worked under the watchful eye of Sr Catherine.

In the Mercy tradition of support for higher education, Sr Barbara encouraged Joy to retrain as a nurse. Joy left high school at 15 years, therefore to obtain a State Enrolled Nurse (SEN) qualification in her 40's was a significant achievement. This qualification led to further employment back at Rosary House Hospital (Ballarat East convent).

During Joy's time nursing at Rosary House, friendships were cemented and new pathways opened. In particular, Joy provided practical support to Sr Majella, a stroke survivor, to attend the local stroke support group. This initial act was the start of many years' service to the Ballarat Stroke Support Group. Joy was their first President and the first Life Member of the Victorian Stroke Association.



### MOLLY HARRIS NEE O'SHEA

(Class of 1940) died on Christmas Day 2016. She had been associated with Sacred Heart College all her life. In fact her own mother was among the first students at Sacred Heart College in the 1880s. Molly and her younger sister Kath were Sacred Heart College students as was her daughter Frances. Molly was President of the SHC Old Collegians and she ran the canteen at St Martin's in a volunteer capacity for years.

MONICA NOLAN (Class of 1971) sadly passed away on 30 July 2017. After leaving school Monica went on to have a long career as a nurse, providing care and comfort to those in need.

MARK LEONARD (Class of 1978) passed away September 2016.

TROY COLIN BRABHAM (Class of 1990) sadly passed away on 24 June 2017.

Former Sacred Heart College Maths and Science teacher PAUL SMITH passed away on Saturday, September 2, 2017 in Geelong. Paul was the beloved son of John and Cath, and a loved brother to Des and Bryan and their families.

A dear friend of the College, FR PAUL MERCOVICH died while on holidays in Alice Springs in September 2017. Fr Paul was very involved with the establishment of Damascus and was the first Co-Governor of the College representing the priests of the Ballarat area. He was Parish Priest of St Alipius for many years before moving to St Arnaud where he covered a big distance in the parishes of that part of central Victoria.

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT AT DAMASCUS COLLEGE

# Thriving With Grit

Luke McKenna: Educator, Author and  
Founder of Unleashing Personal Potential

Luke will unpack the concept of grit – perseverance and passion for long term goals. Parents will be equipped with tools and strategies for building resilient young people to help them thrive, as well as key ideas for helping all of us stick with things that matter, including setting targets, overcoming obstacles, and seeking continuous improvement, learning and growth, with grit.

Wednesday 14 March 2018, 7pm

Venue: John Shannon Centre, Damascus College

Tickets available in January from [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, or any of the foundation schools, we invite you to provide your contact details by visiting our website and selecting Past Students, or by returning the Connecting@Damascus form enclosed.

Providing us with this information ensures that we can:

- Keep you up to date with Alumni news
- Inform you about reunions and other school events
- Deliver "The Road" to you

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

The best start for a **bright future**



[www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)





DAMASCUS COLLEGE  
ACN 609066775

1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear Victoria 3350  
p 03 5337 2222 e [info@damascus.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@damascus.vic.edu.au)  
[www.damascus.vic.edu.au](http://www.damascus.vic.edu.au)

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