

The Road

DAMASCUS COLLEGE

SPRING 2018

OUR COVER

ST PAUL'S MOVE

Celebrating our St Paul's history, yesterday and today.

Our cover photo for this Spring edition of The Road celebrates St Paul's Technical College, a foundation College of Damascus College (1948 - 1995).

The cover photo commemorates the St Paul's move from Lydiard Street to Victoria Street in 1987.

This year Damascus held a St Paul's All Years Reunion on Saturday 20 October, where all past St Paul's students were invited back to Damascus College to re-connect. The cover picture is further explained on page 4.

Pictured across the front row from left to right are: David Tuppen, Jason Jeffrey, Christopher O'Connell, Dale Dockerill and Matthew Kennedy.

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

MATTHEW BYRNE

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Road. As we go to press, Damascus College has much to celebrate and be proud of. Our Year 12 graduates of 2018 have concluded their classes and have moved out to employment or are currently undertaking exams. They are a great group of young people who will make an enormous social and economic contribution to Ballarat and beyond over the decades to come.

I am continually struck by the awesomeness of the contribution of the graduates of Damascus College, Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's. Over recent weeks I have had the pleasure of speaking with alumnus at events such as the St Paul's reunion, the EBT reunion and the reunion of class members of 1972. On each occasion, the diversity of gifts gained on life's journey has been a privilege to hear about, and I thank those alumni who have been able to re-engage with our community.

In celebrating our community, and amazing contributions – Fr Adrian McNerney retired from his role as Co-Governor of the College in June of this year. Fr Adrian has been Governor since the inception of the College, and he contributed to the decision-making process that led to the amalgamation of our founding Colleges. His ministry as parish priest meant that he was always able to build a connection between school and parish. Fr Adrian, in his role as parish priest of St Alipius, maintained Governance of Damascus, three primary schools and the only early learning centre in the Diocese. For 23 years, Fr Adrian has attended Board executive meetings monthly, maintained regular visibility with Board directors and led so many of the liturgical celebrations across the College together with his regular and ongoing support of a broad cross-section of school community events. Prior to his governance of the College, in the early years of his Ministry, Fr Adrian served as chaplain to St Martin's and was well known to many of those students within the school at that time.

Fr Adrian with the respective Mercy Co-Governors has overseen enormous change within our community. Most significantly was the 2011 consolidation of the College to our beautiful Mt Clear site, the oversight of the master plan that has enabled the beautiful learning facilities that we enjoy today, and the establishment of the commemorative trail as a place of reflection

and welcome. Fr Adrian's most significant gift has been in ensuring that our College is a place where the face of God was seen in each individual who sought a Damascus College education. Fr Adrian has always wanted the best elements of our Catholic faith tradition to underpin an exceptional learning experience for each student. As a school community, we celebrated Fr Adrian's contribution at our Damascus Day Mass. Fr Adrian expressed, as he has right throughout his ministry, his enormous pride in our College. As a community, we are grateful for Fr Adrian's leadership over the past 23 years. Thank you, Fr Adrian!

Currently, Sr Berenice Kerr continues to govern the College, and the Association of Canonical Administrators of the Parishes of Ballarat will make an appointment over the coming months.

Damascus has been incredibly fortunate to have a stable and experienced team of staff who support the learning of the students of the College. As I write this article, I am aware of the following staff who will not return next year. Mark Maclean (35/6 years service), Jo-Anne Kennedy (33 years), Greg Dow (33 years), Maureen (Min) Myers (26 years), Rhonda Metcalfe (17 years) and Jane McKendrick (12 years). Collectively these committed educators have over 150 years of Damascus acquired and shared wisdom, and we will joyfully celebrate all that they have given as the year draws to a close.

As a staff team, we are in the midst of busily planning for 2019. Works are about to commence on the renovation of the four Science classrooms closest to Building 7 and the demolition and rebuild of the older Music facility. Plans for the examination centre and gathering place with administrative offices are progressing for the site of the existing convent, and this project will get underway next year. Our master plan will begin to ramp up over the coming months.

Our students and families are the heart of our College, and as we draw one year to a close, we build towards the next. I hope you enjoy the different insights within this edition of The Road and I hope you can visit the College at some point in the near future.

CELEBRATING ST PAUL'S HISTORY

COVER STORY

Our cover photo for this edition recognises and celebrates St. Paul's Technical College as a foundation school of Damascus College.

The Christian Brothers were founded in Ireland in 1802 by Br. Edmund Rice to educate the sons of poor and oppressed Catholic families. The Brothers provided the education whereby these boys gained some control of their lives. When the Bishop of Ballarat, established St Paul's College in 1948, he invited the Christian Brothers to continue their work for boys through the provision of technical education.

The formation of St Paul's was not an easy one, but it was one that was aspirational. When it was officially opened in 1949 it was proclaimed that there was "No Better Technical College in Australia". During the set up and construction of the College Br Cooke was instructed "alter the building as required, get only the best and when things are finished, don't come back for more".

St Paul's began in the Ludbrook House building on Lydiard Street in the heart of Ballarat's central business district. The move from this building to the Victoria Street campus would allow for the expansion of classes as well as provide students with more outside space.

This series of pictures document that move.

On a cold, wet day in 1987, students carried Principal Br Frank Hennessey the 3km between campuses, followed closely by a stream of students carrying chairs and other school items.

We reached out to two members of the Alumni from the day, Br Frank Hennessey and then Yr 11 student Jason Fletcher (Class of 1988). These are their recollections:

Br Frank: I think it was at the beginning of Term 3, on a cold & wet July day in 1987. The 'caravan' was the idea of teacher Bart Mossop to help make the town aware of the move of the old St. Paul's to Victoria St. The senior students carried me all the way from the old school to the new. Bit embarrassing really! Each of the other students carried a chair from the classrooms to Victoria St which you can see that in the background. It was all captured by Ballarat Courier Photographer Herman Ruyg.

Jason: I was indeed there that day – that's my class (year 11) carrying St Paul's Principal Brother Frank Hennessey along Lydiard Street from the original St Paul's building (Ludbrook House on the corner of Lydiard and Market Streets) to the Victoria Street campus in June 1987. You can see the Mining Exchange in the background. The distance travelled is about 3km. Apart from carrying Brother Hennessey, the rest of the school students all carried chairs and other things to save having to get them moved by vehicle.

The move of St Paul's from Ludbrook House to Victoria Street as remembered by Br Frank and Jason and as seen in the pictures taken by Herman was an impressive procession of staff, students and equipment.





ST PAUL'S TECHNICAL COLLEGE

ALL YEARS REUNION

On Saturday 20 October at noon, past students and staff of St Paul's Technical College came together to celebrate an All Years Reunion.

The reunion took place at the Damascus College campus, the first time many of those in attendance had been there. It was important that the reunion take place at Damascus as it built and strengthened the bonds between the St Paul's past students and staff as part of the Damascus community.

The event was a celebration and a chance to remember the contributions of St Paul's as a foundation school for Damascus College.

The reunion was well attended with over 45 past students and staff on hand to enjoy the day. It was a wonderful range of students. It was a treat to have in attendance Mr Geoffery Hayes from the inaugural class of 1948, also the same year he was DUX of the school, as well as students from the Class of 1988, the first year that St Paul's boys went on to do year 12 at the St Martin's in the Pines campus.

The reunion began with some formal proceedings led by current students,

2018 College Captain Sean O'Beirne and McAuley House Captain Castley Webb. Our Principal Matt Byrne then spoke and offered a wonderful welcome to all in attendance. Mr Mark McLean shared with the assembled crowd his journey as a St Paul's past student, then staff member to his current role as Damascus teacher. The final speaker was Mr Jason Fletcher (Class of 1988) who delighted us with his recollections, often hilarious, of being a past student.

The crowd of over 75 enjoyed a BBQ lunch, some drinks and a chance to mingle and catch up.

St Paul's had a long standing tradition of a staff versus student basketball game and archival footage was played and an Exhibition Basketball Game was played by current students of the 2017 Australian Schools Basketball Champions.

Other activities that could be enjoyed by those attending on the day included the EBT Vehicle Display, VCE Visual Arts and Technology Exhibit and the opportunity to go on a campus tour and enjoy our commemorative walk.

The campus tour was a huge success and cemented for those in attendance the ties between St Paul's and Damascus.

It was agreed that the next get together for this cohort would be in 2020.

MY STORY BY MARK MCLEAN

ALUMNI STORY

I was born and raised in Ballarat, the second youngest of a family with five boys. As children, my brothers and I spent great family time on weekends - ferreting, mushrooming, berry picking and seeking the odd nugget of gold, all with Mum and Dad keeping a watchful eye over us. We all attended Catholic schools as we grew up. I attended St Aloysius, St Patrick's Primary, St Paul's, and St Patrick's for Matriculation. I was an altar boy at St Aloysius for a few years and was a keen member of the Churches Tennis association, playing for St Al's.

Growing up, I always loved sport. I played footy for Redan for a short stint, and had other opportunities to compete in a variety of sports. I also enjoyed non-competitive participation in a range of other individual physical pursuits that have included Canoeing, White Water Kayaking, Rock Climbing, Abseiling, Judo, Taekwondo, and even Ice Hockey.

I recall being unsure of my career path as I neared the end of year 12. I was enjoying coaching junior kids in Gymnastics and Tennis at this time and thought that teaching might be the path to follow, which of course I did.

In the final year of my teaching studies, Ballarat Grammar school offered me work during my final teaching round. It was the year Brisbane hosted the Commonwealth games. I was coaching the school's gymnastics club for two years leading up to 1982 and they employed me to cover a duty for a teacher who had taken a school group to the event. My professional teaching career started then.

I then applied at local secondary schools and took the opportunity to start teaching with St Paul's in 1983, as a full-time, permanent teacher. St Paul's was an amazing school. I had really enjoyed the school as a student. The school had an excellent teaching and learning program, and it was a close-knit community with great parent support. I was a youthful looking graduate teacher of 22 years, and at this time struggled somewhat to manage the boisterous boys in year 10 (only six years younger than myself).

Bart Mossop was my mentor - he was enthusiastic, and had an amazing gift for teaching. He could engage the students and manage them like a concert conductor. I guess in reflection it was probably Bart who inspired me to work through the tough times, those times when I wasn't sure if I had chosen the correct path.

At some stage it occurred to me that I should decide why I was doing this 'teaching thing'.

After reflecting, for a period, I realised, if my purpose in life was to make a real and positive difference in the lives of youth, my best opportunity was through the profession I had chosen. I love the idea that we are all unfinished pieces on the potter's wheel. People come into our lives, and if we let them, their influence may be just the thing to keep us steady or lead us to be a better 'Me'. That was my experience with my teachers. They were inspiring.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have many opportunities, including leadership roles being the Year 10 camp coordinator, Year 9 camp coordinator, Outdoor Ed Coordinator, Head of Science, Head of PE, Head of Sport, O'Collins House Leader and temporary Assistant Principal.

Something few people know is that my mother was an Art teacher and taught year 12 Textiles at St Martin's in The Pines (the current Damascus campus) for 18 years. My eldest brother Michael taught Electronics as a part time teacher



at St Paul's when it was in Lydiard street. My Brother Laurie taught at St Paul's at Lydiard street and Victoria street, and mum's sister, Jennifer Bilston, taught Textiles at Sacred Heart. The Damascus College history in the family is quite strong.

Aside from my work as a teacher, my first job was paper boy for the local corner store (answering a 5am alarm and delivering to over a hundred homes, during primary school). I ran a shutter service, securing broken windows for local businesses in the CBD, worked as a Trade Assistant to a Fitter and Turner for a local engineering firm, operated a Home Insulation Installation service, and set up a gardening, lawn mowing service and shed construction sideline. In more recent years I have developed an interest in property development, and Kerrin and I have renovated a few houses in Ballarat.

I met Kerrin, my camping and fishing partner (until the end of time) in 2008, and we married in 2010. Kerrin and I met in Florence - Italy, and we travelled together for several months, and have kept traveling together since then, both within Australia and overseas. Kerrin and I have three boys between us, Joshua (now 31), Nathan (now 30) and Joel (now 29).

After the amalgamation of Sacred Heart, St Paul's and St Martin's in the Pines, I found myself employed by the new - Damascus College, in 1995. Within a very short time the school's administration recognised the need for a special 'hands on learning' approach for a group of students who were at risk of falling through the cracks. A small team of educators were coordinated to develop a special one-off teaching and learning program to be delivered to this special year 9 group in 1998. This was the beginning of the Energy Breakthrough program.

Within a couple of years, the trial program proved there was enough interest from students coming through to establish an extra-curricular 'club' and it was called the Energy Breakthrough team.

Purpose statement circa 1999

The students at this time came up with their mission statement being:

- To grow, in a support network of positive relationships, across age, gender, different personalities & interest groups.
- To give each other opportunities to learn about responsibility &

consequences. To be respectful of others, property & self in a safe working environment.

- To demonstrate good stewardship through a sustainable approach toward the use of environmental, human and financial resources.
- To provide leadership through mentoring & teaching.
- To share knowledge about technology, science, the environment & engineering in a practical hands-on way.
- To teach skills applicable to workshops & industry.
- To develop competitive race hybrids & H.P.Vs

My fondest memories in working with these students over the past 21 years has been the personal growth and confidence they gain. I often find myself reflecting – "how blessed am I? – I get paid well, to do the thing that I love" I can't pick out individual students, there have been so many that I have been fortunate to work with, all with varied experiences. Some of the EBT events that stand out include winning the championship of the world Solar Cycle Challenge in 2005 and the wonderful entries the students made in the Maryborough RACV Energy Breakthrough.

If I was ever asked to offer a tip to the students at Damascus, it would be to discover the best way you can to add value to other people's lives, find someone to pay you well for it, and work hard to be good at it. My definition of a successful life is the progressive realisation of a worthwhile dream, goal or ambition.

After Kerrin and I finish a year of travelling this great country in 2019, we will settle into a property we purchased in Queensland, inland from Fraser Island and The Noosa Coast. We plan to build, buy a bigger boat, do plenty of fishing and camping, and travel where and whenever we can.

I'm registered to teach in Queensland but think it's going to be a 'hard ask' to match the fabulous experiences I've had with Damascus and St Paul's so who knows ... maybe I might become a pro-fisherman – watch out for my YouTube channel!

Mark McLean (Class of 1976)

Current Damascus College staff member





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS & THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MARK MCLEAN

ENERGY BREAKTHROUGH TEAM

In 2018 Damascus College was pleased to celebrate 20 years of the Energy Breakthrough Team and the contributions of staff member, Mark McLean.

On Saturday 20 October beginning at 6pm the group of almost 60 gathered at the Ballarat and District Trotting Clubs formal function room to enjoy a meal, to reminisce and say thank you to Mark. The group was made up of current students and families, alumni and staff as well as community members and volunteers.

Back in 1995, the Damascus College administration called for a "Special Hands on Learning approach" for a group of students who were at risk of falling through the cracks. So a small group of educators were asked to develop a special one-off teaching and learning program that would be taught.

In 1998 that group of Year 9 students were the beginning of the Energy Breakthrough program.

Within a couple of years, the trial program proved there was enough interest from students coming through Damascus to establish an extra-curricular club and it was called the Energy Breakthrough Team.

Current members of EBT Thomas Prunty and Patrick Western (both in Year 10) performed the duties of Master of Ceremonies for the night (superbly) as Sr

Marie Davey led us in a blessing before Principal Matthew Byrne shared his own recollections of EBT as both the principal and parent of an EBT member. This was followed by a special and incredibly heartfelt video message that past EBT member Justin Brennan (Class of 2007) recorded and sent in from one of the remotest parts of Australia in the Northern Territory.

Current staff member and long time volunteer Alan Strange was next to take the podium and share his memories of EBT and why it is still so special to him.

A number of alumni then spoke. Matthew Hill (Class of 2005) led the charge and had the attendees laughing and perhaps shedding a tear as he talked about his journey with EBT and the ongoing and lasting influence that Mark McLean has had on his life. He shared with us a lesson that he still carries with him about making time for the important things in life.

The EBT motto is A.D.I.M.O.V., which is an abbreviation of Adapt, Improve and Overcome. At the end of the formal proceedings Mark McLean was presented with his very own ADIMOV, a beautifully engineered piece by Alan Strange (featured in the centre of the picture above).

The evening was so successful that it was decided that this group would have reunions on a regular basis, the next one is being planned for 5 years time in 2023.



IT JUST WOULDN'T HAPPEN THESE DAYS

BLAST FROM THE PAST

In this well-regulated day and age, it might be fun to take a look back at a simpler time – where kids could be kids and the term “politically correct” was rarely heard. Of course I’m talking about the 80s, when mullets ruled and OH&S... well who ever heard of that?

School camps were really an experience in those days. Perhaps you were one of the lucky ones who got to blast plastic bottles full of water with a shotgun from point blank range? Notice the sophisticated safety procedures – stand as close as you possibly can and put your hands over your ears. All life skills were covered on a St Paul’s College camp – from chicken plucking to butchering sheep – thanks to Bart Mossop, St Paul’s very own Russell Coight.

When you think of Mark McLean, gymnastics might not be the first thing that comes to mind. Not only was Mark an accomplished gymnast while a student at St Paul’s College, but later he became a dedicated coach as well. While these photos of Mark’s gym class may not exactly reflect current practice, they sure do tell a story of PE in the 1980s.

From rabbit drives to eating worms, from river swimming to abseiling down the Lydiard Street school building, the 80s made all of these crazy dreams a reality. Surprise surprise, the boys all lived to tell the tale!

Natasha Adam, Archivist







M. GENEVIEVE MCDONALD RSM 1913 - 2003

DAMASCUS SISTER OF MERCY

It is with great pride and pleasure that we introduce a new section to this College publication, the Damascus Sister's of Mercy. It is an opportunity for us to get to know these wonderful woman a little better.

One does not think of Damascus College without also thinking of the Sisters of Mercy and the rich history they share. Many a young girl owes their education to the "Mercies", and the love they had for the Sisters was apparent in the number of students who returned after their schooling to enter the convent themselves.

One such student was Flora McDonald, later to become Sr M. Genevieve. Born in 1913, the same day her sister tragically passed away as a result of an accident, Flora was a gifted student and musician, and remembered

with great fondness her time spent as a student at Sacred Heart College in Ballarat.

After graduating with Honours from the University of Melbourne, Flora entered the Convent of Mercy and began a long career as an educator, at one point as the Principal of Sacred Heart College, and then as the inaugural Principal of St. Martin's in the Pines where she remained for ten years.

Sr Genevieve was passionate about the importance of women both in the Catholic Church and the world in general, and was particularly concerned with issues of social justice, notably in Thailand and Timor-Leste. The following is an account of her school days taken from the archives.

MEMOIRS OF THE SPIRIT AT WORK

SR M. GENEVIEVE MCDONALD

I came to Sacred Heart College by a roundabout path. Looking back now, I guess the Spirit was at work and really working overtime.

In my early secondary school years my family lived in the country and hence I was a boarder at a Melbourne Convent School. When my father, a State School Principal, was transferred to Ballarat there was no further need for me to be away from home. I sat for the coveted SHC scholarship, but was not successful because there was no Maths taught at my Convent school. Maths was not part of the curriculum, it was more of a finishing school. My father, not a Catholic at the time, was very disappointed in my progress at the Convent school and decided to send me to Ballarat High School, where the Principal, a friend of my Father, was a very good educator.

With great enthusiasm I set forth for my first day at the High School and was warmly welcomed by the Principal. After a very enjoyable day at school, I returned home to find two Mercy nuns – Mothers Alacoque and Bonaventure – sitting in our lounge room talking to my parents. It appeared that a priest friend of ours heard that I had enrolled at the High School and he went post-haste to Ballarat East to tell the nuns to go and “get me” for SHC. Before long it was arranged for me to forget the High School and be ready for the beginning of the SHC school year. My one day at the High School was over.

My early memories of SHC are very happy ones. I was enrolled in Intermediate (Year 10) and, though much younger than others in my class, I soon made many friends amongst both day girls and boarders. Some of these are still close friends after all these years. Our teachers were very concerned for us, the close relationships between staff and students being quite unique. With extra help in Maths, I soon caught up with the rest of the class. Strangely enough, the subject that I had the most trouble with was Botany, which I dearly loved. Sister M. Raphael, a very exacting teacher, made me redo my book three times! It was rather ironic that I eventually majored in Botany at University and taught it with great delight for many years.

My dearest and most exciting memory of that first year at SHC is that of the special celebrations during the month of June for the Feast of the Sacred Heart. I can still remember coming into our classroom on that first day in June to find a complete transformation. The statue of the Sacred Heart on a bracket halfway into the wall in our intermediate room was surrounded by a large red heart illuminated with tiny red electric lights. Below this were pot plants and flowers tastefully arranged. Each morning in June the partitions were drawn back and the whole school assembled for devotions. This was repeated each year and I’m sure that every girl left SHC with special devotion to the Sacred Heart.

After four years, thanks to the excellent teaching, I was fortunate enough to gain a scholarship to Melbourne University where I was able to complete a Science degree – rather unusual for girls in those days. It was not surprising that eventually I was drawn back to the Ballarat East Mercy’s with great love and admiration for their work, their spirit and with a heart full of gratitude for all that I had received.





A PASSION FOR HORSES AND HARD WORK

PREMIER'S VCE AWARD

On Tuesday 15 May 2018, Year 12 student Gemma Armeni was awarded the VCE Premier's Award for her outstanding results in Unit 3 & 4 Equine Studies (VCE VET) in 2017.

More than 1100 guests attended the prestigious event in Melbourne, where Victoria's top-performing VCE students from 2017 were recognised for their outstanding academic results. Gemma was ranked number two in the state for Equine Studies (VCE VET).

Gemma said that her love and passion for the equestrian sport started when she moved to Ballarat from Werribee at age 8 and was introduced to her first pony. This drive only progressed from there and then became competitive.

"In Year 10 I started a two year accelerated Certificate II in Equine Studies through Damascus, with Skillinvest. I love that this course allowed me to study something that I am really passionate about and will potentially give me a pathway to further qualifications in a field that is unique," she said.

"The course has been a great way for lots of different students from varying schools to come together to learn and grow, and was a great way to meet new people who are all passionate to learn about the same thing."

The first year of the course had a wide variety of topics covered including working in the equine industry and also gave Gemma the opportunity to obtain her First Aid certificate.

In her final year of the course, last year the topics focused on equine welfare, nutrition, form and function and equine physiology.

"I was really excited to receive the Premier's VCE Award, as it was totally unforeseen and I felt proud that my hard work and dedication was acknowledged. It made all the sleepless nights worthwhile and has inspired me to work just as hard towards my year 12 subjects this year."

Throughout Year 11 Gemma spent two hours per night, every night of the week for the whole year working on this Equine subject alone.

After Year 12 Gemma hopes to study Physiotherapy at Monash University and then go on to further study to become a Sports Biomechanist, where she endeavours to work with sporting athletes to better their performances and assist them in being the best they can.

The Equine Studies course has also helped her gain contacts in the industry. This has opened up pathways for jobs, including recently being involved with strapping in the 'Ride Like A Girl' film which is dedicated to the life of local Melbourne Cup winner Michelle Payne and set to be released early 2019. "Wherever I go for university, I plan on taking my horse 'Archie' with me and continuing my equestrian goals. An option that I am considering is finding a job in a racing stable whilst I'm at Uni - my Certificate II in Equine Studies will help me to achieve this."

Gemma also represents Damascus College in the Equestrian Inter School competitions and most recently participated in the Marcus Oldham Ballarat International Horse Trials over the Mother's Day weekend, which welcomed over 400 participants from around the world.

We wish Gemma every success in reaching her goals – well done Gemma.





JOSEPH

2018 COLLEGE PRODUCTION

"Any dream will do..."

The line from the famous song is the catalyst for the Damascus College Production of 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' in 2018. It was a musical that encompassed the inherent message that we all seek to live by - to go after our dreams in the face of adversity, to be compassionate, forgiving and to live with integrity.

The Andrew Lloyd Webber / Tim Rice musical, first composed for the Colet Court School students in London in 1968, saw its first full scale American production take place in 1970, coming off the back of Jesus Christ Superstar. It tells the story of Joseph, the favourite son of Jacob who is gifted with a multi coloured coat. Joseph is also blessed with the gift of dreams that foretell the future. His eleven brothers, insatiably jealous, sell him into slavery. After adventures that took us through a soundtrack of musical genres including country and western, calypso, pop, tango and rock and roll, Joseph found his brothers at his mercy. Although serious and sincere in its message, the musical saw the Damascus cast of over 50 students laughing, singing and dancing their way through Canaan and Egypt.

As resonant in our human relationships since the beginning of time as it is today, the 'happy ending' told of the desire to forgive, reconcile and see the good in others. It encouraged us to aspire to a better world through looking inward as well as to our dreams beyond the horizon. Damascus College students were excited to be the next in the over 25,000 schools who have presented this timeless musical tale across the world.

The cast and crew performed to sell-out crowds and packed auditoriums on Wednesday 25 – Saturday 28 July, and also performed a special show to three Catholic Primary School groups as a matinee on the first day of performances.

"For I know I shall find, my own piece of mind, for we have been promised a land of our own..."



PLAYING JOSEPH BOOSTED MY CONFIDENCE

PATRICK WESTERN

My name is Patrick Western, I'm in year 10 and this is my journey with Joseph. A bit of background: I have been in two Damascus College productions before Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat; Grease (2016) as a chorus member, and The Final Hours (2017) as a centurion. It was in these productions where I developed an addiction for theatre and performing arts.

When I heard that Joseph was the production for this year, I had already missed the meeting because I was absent that day. But my little brother Alex was really keen to be in it and he worked really hard with my mum preparing for the audition while I was weighing up whether I should audition. I was hesitant because I had never really sung before, but I tried singing the audition song to my mum and she was really supportive and said I should definitely audition. So after some toing and froing in my head as to whether I should, I decided to audition for a lead. On the audition sheet I circled a heap of different characters, purely because I would have been happy with anything seeing as I didn't know if I could sing. Even though I was really nervous, I came out of the audition feeling content with my performance. About three weeks later I saw that I was cast as Joseph and it was an incredible feeling. I only knew a few of the other people on the audition list including Alex, who was cast as Benjamin, my youngest brother (appropriately).

Rehearsals were really intense for me and I worked as hard as I could to remember my cues and really embrace my character. We worked for about five months, rehearsing two to three times a week to polish our show. Our directors, Maria Russell and Chiara Angeli (Class of 2016) were extremely supportive of me and really boosted my confidence throughout the rehearsal period. The biggest challenge for me in playing Joseph, was managing my stress, being such a large role. I was constantly doubtful and seeking assurance that what I was doing was right. Towards the end of the rehearsal period, I was gifted four hours of singing lessons with Connie Lemke, to help

my confidence and alter a few of the high notes to suit my range better. Those lessons were a blessing. I came out of it with a heap of singing techniques and so much more confidence in my ability.

The shows were an absolute blast and I'm so proud of the whole cast and band for pulling off such a successful season of performance. I believe that this experience has changed me as a person. I went from never singing and hating my voice, to having a passion for it. It has helped my confidence immensely and I am so thankful for all the people that I met and had the pleasure of performing with. I made so many incredible friends that I probably wouldn't have if it weren't for the production which strengthened the friendships I already had.

My fondest memory from the show was holding the last note of the last song on the last night, surrounded by my friends, all sharing the experience together after working so hard. It marked the final experience we would share as a cast and that was so emotional and beautiful. As the curtains were closing, we all completely broke down and there were so many hugs. It was a truly special moment that I will remember forever. This was my first real experience of a musical and it will certainly not be the last.

My advice for anyone considering being in a production is absolutely do it because you will make friends with people you normally wouldn't. You will enhance your performing skills and build your confidence. This opportunity has changed my life and I'm sure it'll change yours too.

Patrick Western, Year 10 Student



ST MARTIN'S FIRST LAY PRINCIPAL

ALUMNI STORY

I was born and raised in Sydney and attended Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney. 'Monte', as it is fondly known, was begun by the Sisters of Mercy in 1875 and, like St Martin's in the Pines, has an excellent academic reputation. It was the kind of school that you were sad to leave on completion of your school days! From there, having won a scholarship, I went to a State Teachers College in Sydney and began teaching at one of Sydney's public schools. I was then "poached" from the Department by the Sisters of Mercy to go back to teach at Monte. Whilst there I began an Arts degree and, after three years, won a Commonwealth scholarship to finish the Honours degree, so I left Monte for full time study always intending to return! However, scholarships followed, firstly for my Master of Educational Leadership degree at UNE, then one to do my doctorate in Educational Leadership in Canada! Consequently, I never got back to Monte! While doing my Master's degree at UNE and holding the position of Senior Resident Tutor in the all-male St Alberts College, I met Sr Valda Ward and this became very significant in my future!

On my return from Canada, I took up an appointment at UNE in Armidale and subsequently, after just 2 years there, I was asked by Sr Valda if I would come and be Principal at St Martins! So I went from being, originally class room teacher, teaching Maths and Phys. Ed. at Monte, to Principal via doctoral study in Leadership. I wanted to eventually move into tertiary education and I was advised to only accept a contract for three years so I wasn't too long out of tertiary work. The Mercy's were happy to accept the three years so I began as St Martin's first lay principal.

My time there was one of the most enjoyable and satisfying times of my life! The girls were exceptionally nice and friendly and the staff, both lay and religious, were a delight to work with. One very satisfying time was when our

girls won their way to the State final of the debating competition. Sadly, they were beaten by Murtoa High whose team went on to the National Final in Sydney. Imagine my delight when I discovered that they lost to Monte - justice was served!!!

On leaving St Martin's I spent a brief period as a consultant with the Institute of Educational Administration in Melbourne and Geelong, where senior leaders in education from across Australia underwent a six week live-in program in leadership. Subsequently I returned to Ballarat to the staff of Aquinas. Then in 1990 I became Director of Aquinas and led it pre- and post-the 'advent' of it becoming part of Australian Catholic University. The university then was very Sydney-centric and many "battles" had to be won to ensure the spirit and culture of Aquinas was retained. In 1994 after a re-structuring of the university I returned to Sydney and was Head of the School of Educational Leadership. This also involved teaching our Leadership Master's degree in Mauritius, New Zealand and in centres all over the eastern/south eastern seaboard of Australia.

In the late 90's I returned to Monte as Chairman of its Board of Directors, and, having thought I had retired as an Adjunct Professor of ACU at the end of 2015, I found myself still doing some formative review work for staff in leadership positions at St Ignatius College Riverview and editing the occasional doctoral thesis. In the future I hope to improve my golf handicap!

Finally, to today's students at Damascus I would say: 'seize every opportunity that comes your way and give it your best effort!' And, to staff, if Damascus is anything like St Martin's was: 'enjoy every moment of it!'

Deirdre Duncan (Staff Member 1979 – 1981)



CELEBRATING OUR IDENTITY

DAMASCUS DAY 2018

On Wednesday 19 September Damascus College celebrated Damascus Day. In 2018 the College theme, 'Never become tired of doing good' was the focus for the whole school Mass and Assembly prepared by the Catholic Culture team. This was followed by a full festival of activities for all to enjoy, organized by the Student Representative Council (SRC).

Held in the John Shannon Centre, the Damascus Day gathering began with the traditional indigenous acknowledgement of land before a dance of the virtues introduced the Mass. In the weeks leading up to Damascus Day, in Religious Education classes students were encouraged to understand that never tiring of doing good is best fostered by developing the virtues of faith, hope, love, fortitude, temperance, prudence and justice. The dance used seven colours to indicate the seven virtues. Student artwork about the virtues was emblazoned on the south wall of the John Shannon Centre for the Mass.

The College Choir singing "Christ be Our Light" welcomed the entrance procession of house banners and 60 Teacher Advisor Group candles and our celebrant, the Vicar General of the Ballarat Diocese, Fr Kevin Maloney.

The reading from St Paul's letter to the Thessalonians that contains the College theme was proclaimed dramatically by Harry Buck and Sarah Mann before the Gospel was welcomed with a moving modern re-enactment written by Andrew Seeary of the Widow's mite from Mark's Gospel. Fr Kevin linked the theme and the virtues with the actions of the woman in the gospel, who gave without counting the cost.



The Prayers of the Faithful based on the seven virtues was followed by the preparation of the gifts accompanied by the Godspel song, All Good Gifts. The Liturgy of the Eucharist, the great prayer of thanksgiving, included the Damascus College traditional movement by the Year 7 students set to the Mass of St Alphonus. Following the Communion Rite and the Recessional Hymn which proclaimed in song that "We are called to act with justice..." the Mass ended. The Damascus Day Mass is one of the major ways in which we show our identity as a College in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Damascus Day Assembly led by 2018 College Captains, Sean O'Beirne and Ellie Carroll, followed Mass and included many highlights. A photo album for 2018 prepared by the Yearbook Committee led to presentations from the Justice Action Group for Catholic Mission, the Timor Leste Immersion and Principal Matthew Byrne. Mr Byrne acknowledged the College captains and introduced the 2019 captains elect, Milly Frost and Matthew Snibson and the Year 12 House Captains for 2019. The tradition of Passing of the Colours concluded the assembly. Following the dismissal of visitors, Sean and Ellie explained the details of the exciting afternoon events to come.

The BBQ lunch cooked by Ballarat South Rotary was the first item of the action packed festival. The theme was 'Blast to the past', where students and staff were invited to dress in gear from one of the decades being highlighted. Students were issued with a 'timeline tracker' that indicated all of the areas they need to visit throughout the festival. There were four decades represented: sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties and each hosted a number of exciting activities. Students who completed at least one activity in each decade were in the draw to win one of three hampers.

The final gathering in the JSC to conclude the festival was a positive reminder of the importance of community events in the life of the College. Damascus Day 2018 had been one to remember.



EVOLVING FROM STUDENT TO STAFF MEMBER

ALUMNI STORY

When asked to write this article for The Road, my first thought was what could I write about? But then I realised that the greatest gift other than education, that the College has afforded me was the wonderful opportunity to spend treasured time with my beautiful friends that I made whilst a student at Sacred Heart College and St Martin's. For me, this was the greatest gift a school could give me. Long lasting friendships that have seen our careers, families and lives evolve.

Those friendship I hold very deep in my heart as I see many of these beautiful souls on a very regular basis. Being only girls at SHC, it forced us to build bonds that have lasted over 33 years! We have travelled together, gone to one another's weddings, played with babies and always made time for one another. Most of these ladies catch up regularly to share their memories with one another. I also have the privilege of working alongside with Kara Linayao (West) and Danielle Skewes who were both SHC and St Martin's girls who graduated with me. I am Godmother to Fiona Harvey's son Charlie, neighbour and cyclist with Susan Kearns, I frequent Lou Ridsdale's famous walnut tree for a cuppa and catch Laura Blake, Regina Molloy and Jo Flynn when they fly in to visits their families.

I have stayed in Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh since leaving St Martins in 1990. I have two children who are my biggest life achievement. Chelsea is 21 and is studying a double degree in Business and Analytics at Swinburne University. My son, Benjamin is in Year 12 and loves his cricket and football. They are both intelligent, witty and active young people who I am extremely proud of. My partner Ray has taught me about the world outside of Ballarat and has encouraged me to appreciate different cultures and my love of cycling. Bernard Bradbury (retired 2001) exposed me to the world of European History and begun my love of European Architecture and Art.

I have been the Learning and Teaching Support Officer at Damascus College for 7 years. When I started working here there were many staff that taught me at SHC and St Martin's who still had education as their passion. If Myra Trugen (current CRT/ retired 2003) had not taught me typing on the old typewriters with the covers on, I probably would not have gotten this job.

For me, my teachers who became colleagues showed me that even though they often saw me at my most vulnerable as an immature school girl, they had the opportunity to see how I grew as the woman and mother I am today. The teachers / colleagues that were most influential to me were Tony Purcell (retired 2016), Sr Marie Davey and Donnie Davidson (retired 2017), Yvette Nesire-McNeil (retired 2015), Bronwyn Strachan (retired 2017) Andrew Seeary, Karen Simpkin, Jo-Anne Kennedy, Greg Dow, Patricia Rowe, Ivanka Saric, Peter Sartori and Gavan Walsh who are all currently on staff.

The grounds have changed dramatically from St Martins to Damascus, but it still has the beautiful serene bush feel. The grassed lawn area and the undercroft are still areas where students congregate in their groups.

For those students beginning Year 7, the little piece of advice I can give is that you should try to make many friends. Some will come and go which is normal in life. However, some will stay with you in your adult life and will be the truest of friends that you can always have a laugh and share a memory with. I loved my time at SHC, St Martins and now Damascus. The Road that I have travelled on, has come full circle for me and has been an enriching life experience.

Aleceia Smith (Class of 1990)
Current Damascus College Staff Member





OUR MUM, MRS MORGAN

ALUMNI STORY

Monica found sanctuary in God. And she found God everywhere – in the church, in people, in the wonders of creation. She taught her children and her students to pray everywhere, and in everything they did. And so, you might say, Monica's life was a prayer: a strong, feisty, determined, loving and gentle prayer.

Monica was born on June 3, 1931 in Rochester. Her mother was Elizabeth Irene Tehan, nee Dullard, and her father was Laurence Joseph Tehan. She had an older sister, Lilian, and an older brother Leo. Lilian died some years ago; Leo died in training with the RAAF during WW2.

Monica went to school at Loreto Dawson Street where she was academically brilliant. Outside school she learnt piano, singing, and Speech and Drama. The Sisters encouraged her to continue on to university to study Law, but that was financially impossible. Instead, she took up an offer from 3BA, after winning a radio announcer competition through St John's eisteddfod during her last year at school. In 1950 she gained her Licentiate in Speech and Drama teaching from Trinity College, London.

Monica was quite famous. She had her own programs daily and weekly, with 3BA, including 'Hospitality House', the Bluebirds' session, and alternate Sunday afternoon programs. She had her own sponsors, and also compered balls, fundraising events, and fashion parades. She interviewed famous

people, did live relays, and was anchor for 'Music of the People'. In 1954 Monica stood in for the Queen, reading the Queen's speech, at a rehearsal for her visit to the Botanical gardens in Ballarat the following day. However, this was the 1950s. When our Mum and Dad's relationship became serious she was told: if you marry, you resign. The enormity of what Mum gave up only struck us, her children, many years later.

Monica followed Ron, our father, in his career as Primary school teacher and her first foray into school rooms was as a teacher's assistant in Stony Creek, South Gippsland. Once we children came along, Monica like many women of the era, became an at-home mother. However, she continued to maintain her connection with education: conducting Distance Education classes in RE at the local state schools, and being a netball coach for many teams over many years; and she wrote the memorial Arawata school song.

Monica was particularly interested in girl's education with an emphasis for Catholic girls which led her to the most controversial, for the time, decision to start a Brownies pack in Lockington, for all girls, Catholic included.

In 1969 Monica and Ron returned to Ballarat, now with three children in tow. Loretta remembers her mother being stopped in a Myers lift – and other places – by people who asked, 'are you Monica Tehan from the radio?'



After returning to Ballarat, Monica became interested again in South Street, where she and Ron had both competed, and in drama teaching. She gradually stepped out of the home into the paid workforce, first working at the office at St Patrick's College, then in the library at Sacred Heart, and then into the classroom as a Drama and RE teacher, and a stalwart of McAuley House. And she was wonderful! So many ex pupils remember her as impacting their lives. Monica was one of the first classroom Drama teachers in Victoria. She generated opportunities for students – whether through public speaking – the Plain English competition and Lions Youth of the Year – or directing school plays for competitions, such as 'The Stolen Prince' at Bendigo comps – or being so wonderful as a teacher of choral speaking that the Sacred Heart Choir won the Trinity College London medal for the highest score given.

Monica also taught Speech and Drama privately from home. She was renowned for gentleness, for compassion and empathy. Some of those students taught from home were taught at a reduced rate because she believed in the power of what she was teaching to change lives and offer opportunities some students would otherwise not receive. Her role as a mentor, model and confidant is memorable.

Monica's love of Drama and Literature spread into every area of her life. She prepared students for competitions, exams and scholarships with exceptional success; she adjudicated Speech and Drama competitions all around Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania; she judged the World Town Criers, Lions Youth of the Year and the Plain English Speaking Award.

Monica was very involved with her church and she greeted the changes of Vatican 2 with enthusiasm. She was determined that women should fulfill their role within the church, and her skills in speaking equipped her to assist in this. She found a teaching and leadership role in building the capacity of the laity as they took on greater involvement in the Mass. She coached readers at church, devised liturgical dances, and coached priests in the delivery of homilies.

Monica was involved in theatre throughout her life. She won awards with Ballarat National Theatre as a young woman, and made her last appearance on stage in 1999 when she played Aunt Ella in Bloc's Oklahoma!

But her most wonderful gift to theatre was her production of Catherine the Courageous. This was a play she wrote and directed, and it was performed to great acclaim, at the centenary of the Sisters of Mercy in 1981. The Mercy nuns were very good to Monica and this was her gift back to them.

Everything Monica did in life was to invest in life – to make life better, to build capacity, to empower, to make change, to bring about a more just world. She had this effect of rippling goodness out into the community.

Monica wrote in Catherine the Courageous:

“ Ah, don't weep for me...
Don't be crying for me darling.
I shall see you again. ”



Prepared by her daughters
Loretta Kaval (Class of 1972) Current Damascus College staff member
and Mary-Rose McLaren (Class of 1979)

LAUNCH OF THE SHINING LIGHT AWARD

INSPIRING ALUMNI

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

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

Nominations are now open and will close Friday 31 May, 2019 at 4pm

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

1. The recipient must be a Damascus College Alumni, living or dead
2. Categories for selection are:
 - Service to the global community
 - Science/Technology
 - Arts
 - Sport
 - Business
 - Academia
 - Faith Development
3. Be successful in their chosen field as demonstrated by positions held, achievements, qualifications, awards/prizes/scholarships and length of service
4. The work/actions of their chosen field support and uphold Social Justice and Christian Values.
5. The alumni has made contributions or supported the College and global community in ways that are inspirational or motivational.

Nominations must be submitted on the prepared nomination form available at damascus.vic.edu.au and include supporting documentation and relevant evidence.

The winners will receive:

- A 3-5 minute inspirational Biopic/Documentary video that will be made/filmed by the College
- Award trophy and certificate for display
- Name and award category listed on Honour Board displayed at Damascus College
- Gift from the College
- Formally inducted and celebrated at a Damascus College event

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



connecting@Damascus



“WE SHOULD BE SHINING LAMPS
GIVING LIGHT TO ALL AROUND US.”

CATHERINE MCAULEY



WELCOME TO TIMOR - LESTE
ARRIVAL AREA



A TRULY UNIQUE PLACE

TIMOR LESTE IMMERSION TRIP 2018

Timor Leste, and particularly Ainaro, was everything I expected and like nothing I expected, both at the same time. I'd spent long periods in developing countries before, like Vietnam, Bangladesh and the Philippines, so the challenges facing people living without many of the things we take for granted were not unfamiliar to me. Dili was hot, crowded and dusty. There was no rubbish disposal, the traffic appeared to be chaotic to the untrained eye, and the Timorese approach to OHS would turn any trade teacher's hair grey. All of this was not new.

As usual in a developing country, as we travelled further from the capital, things generally got worse. The roads were some of the worst I've ever seen, not helped by the extremely mountainous terrain and what would appear to have been a particularly wet rainy season.

It really didn't matter where you went, there was always rubbish - wrappers and containers and plastic bags mostly.

It seemed that there was not a single water pipe in the whole of Ainaro that didn't leak, and the electrical wiring in some buildings and shops was ... creative.

There is a hospital in Ainaro, servicing approximately 14,000 people, that is about the size of the old convent at Damascus (a three-bedroom brick veneer). But even after the old convent was hit by a falling tree in the storm of 2014, it still looked like it was in much better condition than the Ainaro hospital.

There were domestic animals everywhere - cows, buffalo, chickens, goats, horse, pigs, and dogs. Dogs roamed everywhere, with no apparent owners

or supervision, and some of them looked decidedly unfriendly (as Macy Ludeman can testify). Initially, everywhere we went the dogs would bark furiously at us, but they seemed to get used to us over time. Perhaps we smelled funny?

Time took on a more flexible, almost rubbery, consistency. People will be where they said they'd be, eventually, but don't be expecting anyone to be on time. That would only lead to frustration and stress. Maybe it's the heat, but you're not so inclined to rush when it's so hot and humid. Everywhere we went, we could hear people calling out "Malae, malae" (foreigner), and we were clearly objects of fascination, curiosity and sometimes fear. In some places I guess they don't see many European faces.

All transactions, large and small, took place in cash, and getting used to carrying large amounts of currency was difficult after living in the EFTPOS and PayPass world of Australia. Working out how much things cost with limited language skills on both sides of the transaction was always tricky.

But this was where Timor started to deviate from my expectations. People didn't haggle - the price was the price, and there was no inflation for Westerners. Everybody paid the same.

I felt safer there with my wad of cash than I do standing at the ATM in Sturt Street, and when people called out "malae, malae" it was with a smile and a wave, not a hand out or a sneer, as I've seen in other places. I didn't see a single person begging, and the taxi drivers at the airport gave up after our first polite refusal of their services. Quite often in other countries kids will delight in trying out the few swear words they have learnt in English, even if they don't understand what they mean. It can be quite disconcerting to hear language



that would make a trucker blush coming from the local urchins, particularly at full volume as you pass them on the street. But not once did I hear anything even approaching this in Timor, only “Hello, how are you?” and “Where are you going?” People were really keen to engage in conversation with the 15 students and four adults in our group, not just to see if we had money or practice their English, but also out of a genuine interest in who we were and what we were up to.

Timor has a violent history, particularly in recent times, after being invaded by the Japanese in 1942 and the Indonesians in 1975, and the destruction after the pro-independence referendum of 1999. There was still evidence of destruction in ruined buildings and monuments to those that died. Some estimates put the number of deaths during the Indonesian occupation as high as 200,000. But in the people themselves there was no anger, no violence. I asked quite a few people how they felt about Indonesians. Universally their response was that they had no harsh feelings towards the people of Indonesia, as the people were not responsible for the actions of a few members of the government and the military. I’m not sure if I could feel the same way if I were Timorese.

Once away from Dili, the countryside we saw was stunningly beautiful. Everyone told me how nice the people were but no-one mentioned that we could expect such vistas. Villages such as Maubisse on the road between Dili and Ainaro were picture postcards of temperate mountain retreats (Maubisse even prides itself on growing strawberries!) Ainaro itself is surrounded by mountains, to which no photographs I have seen can do justice. The school where we spent so much time has a jaw-dropping backdrop that has to be seen to be believed.

And the school. The local approach to timekeeping (“Timor-time”) still applied, so most classes started about 30-40 minutes late, and still some stragglers wandered in after that. Greg Dow and Mark McLean would have a fit. We crowded in, up to 55 students in a classroom, with just desks and a blackboard. Our students did a magnificent job of providing the English lessons they had planned, and by the end of the week they were talking like old pros about the group of naughty boys up the back, and adapting their lessons on the fly when things didn’t quite work out. Despite a tricky language barrier, the genuine interest of our students and the warmth and charm of our hosts saw many friendships develop, and many tears when it was time to part.

How to sum up an experience that is everything like and nothing like you expected in such a short piece of writing? I can’t. But next time you’re planning a trip to Bali or Thailand, consider Timor Leste instead. It truly is unique.

Nick Yandell

Current Damascus College Staff Member



KINDNESS CAN SAVE LIVES

TIMOR LESTE IMMERSION TRIP 2018

Wow, what an incredible experience!

It so hard to describe how privileged and grateful I am to have been able to go to beautiful Timor Leste.

Whilst overseas I learnt many valuable lessons that I still think about on a daily basis two months after arriving home. The first lesson that I learnt was the importance of education, my experiences overseas caused me to truly understand how lucky we are to go to such an amazing and well equipped/ resourced school. Through learning this lesson I have found an extra push to try extremely hard with my study and to use the amazing facilities and resources I have, and maybe in the future use this knowledge to help others in improving their own knowledge.

I also learnt the importance of the small things. Things that may be trivial and insignificant to us can mean the whole world to others, for example we don't wake in the morning wondering if we can provide our family's and selves with basic services and rights, because for many of us it is just a given and something that teenagers don't have to ever think about as we are so well cared for by our parents and guardians.

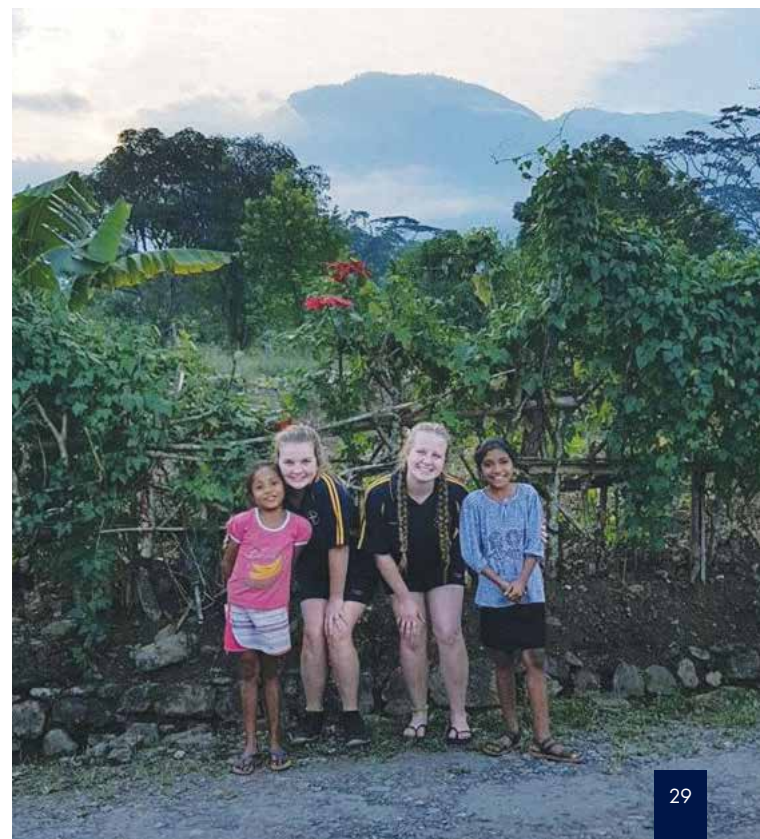
The final and most important lesson that I gained in Timor is how kindness has the potential to change a life.

A smile or a wave hello (or bondia in Tetun) made a significant difference in some of the Timorese lives. This may be due to the fact that they know that people care for their needs and urgent calls for help, that they can rely on Australia to help improve their struggling nation.

I learnt so many wonderful things about myself, my peers, my teachers and about the culture and history of Timor through taking advantage of all the opportunities we were provided with on the trip.

After reflecting on the experience I am definitely considering to go back, and continue to help the less fortunate and ensure that everyone has a safe, productive, healthy and happy future because every individual deserves the same opportunities to make their life an amazing one.

Daisy Jessup, Year 11 Student





MOTHER'S & FATHER'S DAY

LITURGY & BREAKFAST CELEBRATIONS

This year we saw record high attendance numbers at the annual Mother's and Father's Day Liturgy and Breakfast events. We welcomed 160 on Mother's Day and 155 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.

LAP OF THE LAKE

COLLEGE SPORTING EVENT

The annual Lap of the Lake was held again on 28 March, where more than 800 students ran around Lake Wendouree, in an effort to earn points for their House towards the Ron Matthews Shield. Year 7 and 8 student ran 4km and Year 9 to 12 ran the entire 6km around the lake.

It was great to see so many students representing their House and there was a wonderful spirit of healthy competition throughout the day.





STUDENTS VOLUNTEER AFTER ST PATRICK'S DAY FIRES

DAMASCUS VCAL STUDENTS

“Farmers are the primary suppliers of food,
and without farmers,
we don't eat,
and food is a requirement
for survival”

Celeste Towers, Year 11 Student

More than 20 Damascus students studying VCAL volunteered their time on 24 - 25 May 2018 at the Cobden Fire Relief, as part of the Blaze Aide organisation.

Blaze Aide is a volunteer-based organisation that works with families in rural Australia after natural disasters, such as fires and floods. Working alongside families they help to rebuild fences and other structures that have been destroyed or damaged as well as cleaning farm properties.

The South West region of Victoria was affected by fires on St Patrick's Day this year, and the students chose to volunteer in this way as part of their Religious Education Social Justice Unit – Pay it forward.

Year 11 student Celeste Towers said that the students really wanted to help people in need within the local community, and identified the Blaze Aide organisation, as they do such great work in assisting families that have lost a lot of their land in natural disasters.

The students stayed in the area overnight to help Blaze Aide re-build fencing and donated perishable goods to the families affected by the fires.

“Getting involved with Blaze Aide enriched us as students in so many ways; it helped us to develop our Christian beliefs and values, helping us to learn empathy, build strength and character, assisted in developing our work skills in a different environment and enabled us to face the reality of seeing people who have lost everything.”

SPEED DATE A SCIENTIST

STEM EXPO

On Monday 7 May, all Year 9 students had the opportunity to take part in the annual STEM Expo, where they got to speed date a Scientist for the day.

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

Ivanka Saric, Science Learning Area Leader said that this event exposed students to careers in Biology, Engineering, Chemistry, Maths, Environmental Science, Technology, Physics and Psychology.

“It was a great opportunity to introduce these disciplines to students in Year 9 so that they consider these subjects when heading in to Year 10 and VCE.”

“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 walked away with a greater understanding and appreciation for these career options.”

We welcomed speakers who are Nurses, Geologists, Mechanical Engineers, Science Authors, Biomedical Scientists, Civil Engineering student, Mechatronics student, Midwives, Electrical Engineers, Medical students, Biomedical Engineers, Epidemiologists, IT Researchers, Nuclear Pharmacists, Research Technicians, IT professionals and a Vet and Wildlife student.



PAST STUDENT, NURSE & AUTHOR

ALUMNI STORY

I am a St Martin's in the Pines graduate of 1992. Our year was the first year of VCE which was a major learning curve for both us as students and the teachers! I loved my time at St Martin's and was an active member of the school community from studying Biology, Business Management, Human Development and my favourite subject Drama to participating in drama performances, the Deb ball, socials and sports days.

My fondest memories are of the life-long friends I made at St Martin's, some of which I still catch up with today. I recall hanging out with friends in the undercroft and the bus trips to and from school and eating chips and gravy with friends at Central Square.

Since graduating I went on to study a Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Ballarat and completed this in 1995. My graduate year of Nursing was completed at Cabrini Hospital, Malvern, Melbourne.

I returned to Ballarat in 1997 and after marrying, started a family with my husband. I went back to Ballarat University and completed a Graduate Diploma in Midwifery in 2001 and worked as a Midwife at St John of God Hospital for many years.

In 2011 I completed a Masters Degree in Child, Family and Community Nursing with Latrobe University, Bundoora enabling me to practice as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse which I continue to do now. Much of the

time I was studying I was also raising our four children. Two are now adults living in Melbourne and two remain at home and are at school in Ballarat.

Throughout all these years, I have had the honour of assisting and caring for many families of past and present students and staff of the Damascus community.

My latest achievement is writing a book called 'Survive and Enjoy Your Baby, How to Find Your Path to Parenthood', available at good book stores and from my website belindajoyce.com which includes support networks, a blog and resources and strategies for new parents.

My aim is to support new parents with their families and to provide non-judgemental, evidence-based information and support. The book includes all the essential topics many new parents who are desperately seeking answers to such common topics as crying, sleep and settling, feeding, equipment, play and development.

My advice to current Damascus students is to take every available opportunity, do the work and to follow your dreams because anything is possible.

Belinda Joyce nee Lance (Class of 1992)



SHARING HAPPINESS WITH THE COMMUNITY

JAKE SBARDELLA

Year 7 student Jake Sbardella is an extraordinary young man. Jake values happiness and everything he has in life so much that he wants to share this happiness with others.

Jake lives in Buninyong and from a very early age he has always been concerned about people who are homeless and wanted to do something to help them out. With the assistance of his mother Emma Sbardella, they have developed and sold Christmas and Easter happiness advent calendars for the last two years, raising money for the homeless.

Jake said that after visiting Melbourne he was really sad about seeing the homeless people on the street and he sat down with his mum to work out how they could help.

"I have been given the gift of a home and a loving and caring family, and some people in the world don't really have that, so it meant a lot to me that people who are homeless have somewhere to sleep," he said.

"We went online and found a YouTube clip about the street swags and thought this was a great way to help. So our aim was to raise \$95 to purchase one sleep swag."

The Happiness advent calendars feature a happiness quote or joke to read each day on the countdown to Christmas, instead of traditional chocolate, as a daily reminder of how blessed we are in life.

"I choose all the quotes and jokes for the calendars and mum designs them. I chose characters for the calendars, Pugsly the Pug, Felix the Fox and Rosie the Rabbit."

Jake approached a local printer who offered to print the calendars for free, so that all proceeds raised could be donated to the homeless.

"We have now created a facebook page to raise awareness and have had orders from all over Australia, and we also attend local markets throughout the region to sell the calendars," he said.

In 2017 Jake received an Australia Day award from Backpack Beds for homeless and was nominated for three Ballarat Youth awards. He was lucky enough to be the youngest person ever to win the overall City of Ballarat Youth Award major prize for 12-17 year olds, for his efforts in fundraising.





"I really enjoy selling my calendars, spreading happiness to people and raising money for people in need. At first I thought I was too young to make a difference until I realised that I can actually do something".

“One of my favourite quotes which inspired me, is even if you're little you can do a lot.”

At the end of 2017 Jake donated a staggering \$6,800 to Ballarat's homeless, including purchasing Backpack Beds and donating them to Anglicare Ballarat and St Vincent De Paul Ballarat, and donations to the Anglicare Breakfast Program, the Ballarat Shower Bus and the Ballarat Soup Bus. Jake's fundraising goal is \$10,000, and he is confident he will achieve this goal by the end of this year.

"Once I reach my goal of \$10,000, I know that this will not be the end of the calendars, I will continue to fundraise in to the future."

The facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/happinessadventcalendars/>



A MOMENT WITH YEAR 12 STUDENT & ATHLETE

SAM RIZZO

How you were chosen for the 2018 Commonwealth Games?

Two weeks before the official announcement of the 2018 Australian Commonwealth team I got a call from my mum, Debbie, to tell me that I was selected for the team. I was in the school office when she rang, though I didn't think that my chances were high, what I was hoping for came true.

What did it mean to you to be part of the Australian Team?

To be a part of an open Australian team meant the absolute world to me. It has been my dream since 2008, when I met my coach, Richard Colman, at a Spina Bifida family camp. Then later on that year I watched him on my TV at home win gold at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic games. From that moment on I knew that is what I wanted to do, I didn't know when or how I would even get into the sport, but I knew someday I would. After another four years of trying different sports such as, swimming, MX and Wheelchair Basketball, which I didn't really enjoy, I knew it wasn't where I belonged. In 2012 we got a phone call from Colman's mother, asking if I wanted to come and give a racing chair a shot, I jumped on the opportunity and the rest is history.

Did you make friends with other athletes during the Games?

Before the games I was introduced to an athlete and her coach who were from Mauritius, they were staying in Melbourne and were training with my coach leading up to the championships, I had the honour to also meet and train with them, so I had already formed a relationship before the games. During the Commonwealth games, I was lucky enough to already know a few people and had some friends there. A year before I had competed in the IPC World Para Junior Championships, it was there I met and formed a relationship with two of the athletes on the team that would later get on the Australian team for the Commonwealth Games with me. I had also already known all of the wheelchair athletes that compete in wheelchair athletics from previous events. This made it a lot easier for me and I could then focus on the race.

Have you been to the Gold Coast before?

Two months prior to the Commonwealth Games, the Australian Open National championships were held at Carrara Stadium, so my coach and I flew up to the Gold Coast to get a tear up on the track. When I first saw the track I was a bit taken back at how big it was, I had never seen, nor competed in a stadium that big before.

How did you feel when you knew you were part of the Australian Team?

When I got the phone call that said that I had been selected I was of course really happy, but it didn't really sink in until I was on the plane two weeks later, making my way to the games.



What were you looking forward to the most about competing in the Games?

I was most looking forward to being a part of the Australian team as an open athlete. Obviously I was stoked that my first open championships was to be in front of a home crowd, just like how the famous Kurt Fernley began his open career. I honestly was just looking forward to the whole experience.

How did you find living in the Athlete's village? Best parts? Challenges?

Staying in the Athletes village was amazing. The organisers made sure that all the athletes had everything they needed throughout their stay that would make them as comfortable as possible; they had everything sorted so that the athletes didn't have to worry about anything and could concentrate on their upcoming events.

What is your fondest memory of participating in the Games?

I remember the first time I pushed onto the Carrara Stadium track. When we rolled out the crowd went crazy, as we continued doing our warm up laps you could hear them cheer louder as you went by. I distinctly remember that this was the time that it really clicked in that I was actually competing for Australia at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

What have you learnt about yourself through being a part of the Games?

I came away with a refreshed set of goals and even more motivation, to continue to push myself more, allowing me to grow as an athlete.

What advice would you give to students thinking about working hard at a particular sport?

If you are thinking about getting involved and working hard in a sport, it is simply about getting out and having a crack, the only way is up and self-improvement.

Were there any challenges whilst at the Games? Something that you have learnt from?

The 1500m is a very strategic race, I learnt a lot in the months leading up to the Commonwealth Games and a lot more at the games as well. I am still young and do not claim to know it all, I look forward to learning not only to be a fast athlete but a smart racer as well.

What are you now looking forward to after the Games?

I am currently putting in the fun hard winter training to get myself ready for the upcoming summer season. I will aim to be competing in what will sadly be my final All Schools State and National championships, I will be giving it my absolute all to go out on. I will also be competing in the 2019 Summer Down Under series and hopefully be able to get some nice qualifying times for next year's World Para Open Championships.

Do you plan to continue with this sport after finishing school? What are your long term goals?

I will be continuing in para athletics after high school and for the years following. My goal is still the same as it was ten years ago, to compete and win gold in the Paralympics and of course to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.



EXPERIENCING A FRENCH WAY OF LIFE

FRENCH LANGUAGE TRIP 2018

On March 21 this year an excited though somewhat apprehensive group of fifteen students and three staff, Maureen Myers, Andy Robertson and myself, met at Tullamarine airport ready to head off for the 2018 French Language experience visiting Switzerland and France. Some 27 hours later, after stopovers in Singapore and Dubai, we arrived in Geneva, Switzerland and, not to be daunted by the hours of travel behind us, set out to see some of the sights of the city.

We had one night in Annemasse before we travelled to Begnins, Switzerland, for six nights homestay, a weekend of activities with the host families and attendance at the College de l'Esplanade. Students had been communicating with their host families prior to the trip but there was some tentativeness as they met them in person for the first time, facing five days in a new family and a new culture. A weekend of activities where their hosts treated them royally produced a very different group when they returned to school. That is not to say that there were not some anxieties as our students adapted to their new surroundings but we were really proud of the way they handled their unfamiliar situation. For most it was an experience of mutual benefit – our students practising their French and their hosts polishing their English skills. The improvement in the use of the language was enhanced by being immersed in its use in everyday life.

While the students were in Homestay at the weekend, we three staff were looked after by some very generous staff from the school – giving us an experience of their beautiful country and their great hospitality.

In classes students learnt to get to know and to introduce one another and worked in groups to learn more and to practise their language skills. Our students had prepared presentations to tell the Swiss students about our

school, city, country and these were presented to various classes throughout the few days. The staff at the College organised an excursion for our students and their hosts to visit the Charlie Chaplin Museum in Vevey. It was both enlightening and lots of fun – some got right into character!

A dinner on the last night of our stay in Begnins showed a marked difference in the mixing of the students from their first meeting. Some lasting friendships were formed and many of the students have continued their correspondence with their host families with promises to return some day.

“This homestay and school experience is a highlight of the trip for the students. It is a wonderful opportunity to experience life in a different culture and realise the similarities and the differences between families and school systems on opposite sides of the world.”

And so, after sad farewells, we set off on new experiences to enhance our knowledge of new and different places. First stop Geneva and the United Nations and the Red Cross Museum and then on to Annecy for our first night of touring. Further touring took us to Gorges du Fier, Lyon, Halles Paul Bocuse - where I thought I ordered a light lunch - Oops! Musee des Confluences,





Vulcania Theme Park, Clermont-Ferrand and the Puy de Dome where we felt we were on top of the world. After this we moved on to Dun sur Auron to visit the College Le Colombiere. Dun sur Auron is just a small village and we were welcomed like royalty by the students in the school and given a civic reception by the mayor of the village. It was quite humbling to be welcomed with such enthusiasm.

We moved on then to our second Homestay experience in Angers. Students from Angers have been coming to Australia for a homestay experience with Damascus College students for the past three years but this was the first time that our group has reciprocated. This was only a three night stay – but it was great to see some students reunited with students they had hosted in previous years and to make connections with some who were coming to Damascus.

The College there has a strong international program, welcoming visitors from all over the world. We were made very welcome and joined an American group for a day excursion to Saint Malo and Mont Sainte Michel. Students spent some time with classes at the school but the time was too short for real immersion. Nonetheless there was another emotional farewell at the station as we left for Paris.

Having spent our travel time through the country on a coach, it was a new experience to leave Angers and to travel by train to Paris where we spent our time sightseeing around Paris. We visited the usual highlights around Paris and experienced some of the life of the Paris streets, enjoying the bubble blower in the square. For me two of the highlights of the days were two performances that we experienced – Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' in La Sainte Chapelle – beautiful music in a magnificent setting – and on our last night in Paris the live performance of 'Grease' in French.

Overall the trip was a great experience. I was lucky enough to have gone with the previous group in 2016 – this trip took us to some different places. We took a great group of students. Despite being tired, they really did show great resilience throughout the trip. Three weeks away from family and friends back home is challenging – especially for some who had not travelled overseas before. We were proud of the way they conducted themselves and they were a credit to their families and to Damascus as ambassadors in a foreign country.

It is a great opportunity for students (and their accompanying staff) to experience life in another culture and to form lasting friendships. For many it whets the appetite for further travel and gives confidence that it is something to be embraced.

Marie Davey RSM
Former Deputy Principal, Damascus College



A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE THROUGH MY EYES

FRENCH LANGUAGE TRIP 2018

In March this year 16 Year 10 and 11 students studying French, along with three teachers, embarked on a journey to the other side of the world. We spent a week in Switzerland with a host family, attending school in the village of Begnins, and the following weeks travelling through the sights and cities of France, stopping for another homestay in Angers.

It all began with an application letter. We were to fill out a booklet consisting of questions about the countries and landmarks we were to visit, as well as our previous experiences and abilities with languages and travelling overseas. Coming from a European family, I have enjoyed several overseas trips and gained experience coping with language barriers. During the application process, we were asked "why do you want to go on the tour?" For me, it was simple. I wanted to broaden my knowledge and experiences of cultures and languages with a diverse group of people.

As soon as we landed in Switzerland, we already felt lucky being in Geneva, a place of wondrous scenery. We arrived at the school of our hosts and were welcomed with open arms. Each student spent the weekend getting to know their families, exploring their country and investigating their cultures, traditions and of course, food! The following days in Begnins were spent at school attending our hosts' classes, socialising with the students and teaching them about our life back home. Many of the students that were privileged enough to go on the tour formed strong bonds and relationships with their hosts that will last a long time, and many found it difficult to say goodbye.

That brought us to France. We began in Annecy, an historic city of cobblestoned streets and pastel-coloured structures, exploring the culture, food and scenery. The journey continued to Lyon, France's second largest city. The group visited historic chapels and mountain ranges. On the way to our second and final homestay of the tour, we visited a small town school and spoke with the students about our different lives on the other side of the world. This was one of the most memorable moments of the trip, we were welcomed

by the whole school at the gate, just waiting to get a glimpse of us foreigners!

We met our hosts from Angers and attended school with them for two days, going to their classes or exploring the historic port of Saint-Malo or the island of Mont Saint Michel, even tasting treats at a Chocolaterie! Although we only spent a few days with our host families, some of us will be able to continue the relationship when our host friends visit Australia in the future through school trips.

And then there was Paris.

Sacré-Cœur, l'Arc de Triomphe, le Tour Eiffel, le Louvre, la Seine and le Palais de Versailles as well as many other famous attractions in Paris were highlights of the entire journey for many of the students. Personally, the feeling of standing under the Eiffel Tower made me feel so small compared to everything that we are a part of, and when we witnessed a man get down on one knee and propose in the centre of the tower, it gave me a feeling I can't even begin to describe. In terms of culture, their way of life isn't dissimilar to ours.

For those considering going on the next French Trip, just go for it! Don't take things for granted, take lots and lots of photos and take every opportunity you get to experience a different culture. It is the perfect chance to spark a lifelong love for travel and grow relationships with friends around the world as well as the others in your group. I believe it was an unforgettable journey, giving me a new level of appreciation of the world of varied languages and cultures.

Some things to take away from the experience was to value the world we live in, accept and appreciate each other's differences and every once in a while, just stop, take a breath, and look around at how privileged you are to be living the life you are, exploring every corner of the Earth.

Hannah Mrockowski, Year 10 Student



ENJOYING THE JOURNEY'S

ALUMNI STORY

I'm originally from Cape Town, South Africa but I've been living in Ballarat for eight years now. I moved to Ballarat with my mother, father and brother. I started at Damascus in 2011, I was in year 8. It was hard to start a year later and mid-way through the term because everyone already has all their friendship groups sorted and they are all comfortable with one another. Luckily after a week or so I settled into things and made strong friendships that have lasted the test of time so far.

My fondest memory of school was probably the Year 12 retreat. It really helped to establish a connection of support between the year 12s, as well as it being a good few days away at the beach! The staff of Damascus are absolutely amazing; there is no way I could ever single out one particular teacher. Throughout my years at Damascus I received so much help and support from all the staff whether I was a student of theirs or not.

I'm really happy with how I spent my time at Damascus. I was pretty involved with everything. I was part of the SRC, acted in the school plays, went to Timor on the Immersion. I even played school sports (not very well) and in Year 12 I was School Captain. I do wish, however, that I had applied myself more in music.

The best thing about being a student was the structure and support it provided. Once you leave school it's all on you to do as much or as little as you want to. I also loved that I was able to see my friends pretty much every day - having a day when you are all free to meet up is a rare occurrence once you've left school.

Currently I am working and travelling.

Once I had left school I had always believed I would pursue a degree and career in acting. To an extent I have. I currently work as a part of the acting team at Sovereign Hill. I have realised acting isn't exactly my cup of tea, so now I'm just slowly figuring things out.

Five years from now I'd potentially love to have set up my own business.

Since leaving school I have been hopping between work and travel and I'm loving it.

I had the amazing opportunity to travel around different parts of the world. This year I spent my 21st in a remote village in Thailand working with elephants, which was pretty amazing. I have also travelled from Zimbabwe to South Africa this year. I have learnt quite a bit about the crazy world we call home.

I will definitely be going to my 10 year reunion. I'd love to see a few friends with whom I've lost touch.

Year 7s, my advice to you is to enjoy yourselves and have fun during your time at school, because it'll be over before you know it. Year 12s remember your final mark does not define how successful you'll be in life. It's ok if things don't go totally to plan, life is full of twists and turns - it's all part of the fun.

I just want to say thank you to everyone at Damascus for making my time at high school one of the best experiences of my life.

Marie-Angeline Economou (Class of 2015)



RAISING AWARENESS OF HOMELESSNESS THROUGH SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

HANNAH FARHALL

Year 10 student Hannah Farhall participated in the Western Bulldogs Leadership Project last year and has this year, taken the next step to be involved in the Western Bulldogs Social Enterprise Project.

As part of the Leadership Project, Hannah was one of 150 students who took part in the six month project where they participated in a range of interactive activities, camps and developed a social justice project that raised awareness of homelessness in the local community.

2018 is the first year of this innovative new online social enterprise project, that sees a group of 15 students participate in projects that make money in a socially responsible way.

Hannah said that she really enjoyed the Leadership Program last year, which has now led to her volunteering to participate in this new project to help make a difference in the community.

"I really enjoy being a part of this new project, as I get to make a real impact, raise awareness of homelessness and I learn skills on how to be a leader. I also get to meet and interact with a wide range of people from around Western Victoria, where I learn about them and the impact they are making in their communities," she said.

Hannah's Social Enterprise Project is 'Socks of the West,' where she works closely with two other students, and part of the project led them to making a successful pitch to the Western Bulldogs Administrative Board for approval to move forward with the project, and for financial sponsorship.

This sponsorship has allowed the group to manufacture and design their own socks, and for every pair sold they donate a pair to the homeless in the community.

"We have launched a website socksofthewest.com.au and hope to be able to promote the socks at AFL games with the Western Bulldogs"

At the end of the six month project, the student group will present the impact of the project to the Administrative Board, where they hope to continue this after the conclusion of the program.

Hannah loved the experience so much that her twin sister Megan is now part of the 2018 Leadership Project.

The Western Bulldogs Leadership Project began in 2013 offering unique opportunities for young people to build confidence, make new friends and develop skills that will enable them to become future leaders in their community.

Hannah Farhall, Year 10 Student





CLASS OF 1978

40 YEAR REUNION

The class of 1978 reunion began with a welcome reception at Damascus College on Saturday 28 April at 2pm. The reception was extremely well attended by over 50 past students and staff from this cohort. For some in attendance they were catching up with people that they had not seen in 40 years, from the last day of school when they said goodbye. Having such a well-attended reunion is the culmination of many hours of work, Facebook posts and countless calls.

The planning and organising for this reunion started slowly until one brave soul put up her hand and took on the responsibility of being the leader, that lady was Anne Nijam. From the moment Anne took the reins the participation and involvement of the students from this cohort was overwhelmingly positive.

Ladies from the class of 1978 enjoyed an opportunity to mingle with a glass of champagne and canapés in the Mercy Wing Boardroom decorated with bits and pieces from the 70's to help set the mood. Music from the era was playing and pictures and yearbooks were on display to assist with the trip down memory lane that is such a big part of a reunion. The ladies enjoyed a trivia competition before heading out to have their group picture taken and to enjoy a tour of the school.

After departing the Damascus College campus the Class of 1978 converged on the Mallow Hotel for a dinner, more drinks and a lot more fun and laughter

as more memories were shared, some tears as past students were mourned and more plans were made to stay in contact.

A huge thank you to Anne Nijam who not only spearheaded the huge amount of work to organise the reunion in April but also for your ongoing commitment to this group to ensure that you stay connected.

In attendance were past students Gen Barlow, Jane Notman, Jayne Corbet, Anne Nijam, Sonia Rosenberg, Ann-Marie Creati, Susan Dodd, Jean spittle, Gen Dooley, Kate McLaughlin, Liz Lawless, Bernie O'Brien, Alison Kenna, Theresa Van Leest, Ruth Ryan, Lou Delahunty, Maureen Ryan, Liz Wines, Mary McAloon, Joan Colbert, Lyndon Baxter, Angela Walsh, Trish Burchell, Ros Monaghan, Trish Caldwell, Carmel O'Shannesy, Marta Kasarik, Fiona Murnane, Tracey Allen, Monica Lynch, Lisa Wilson, Anne Kelly, Gretel Heesh, Kathy Carson, Helen Clancy, Anne Marie Brophy, Jane Lafferty, Suzanne Forster, Lynne Barry, Amanda McLennan, Jane McMahon, Kerry Grant, Denise Shannon, Felicity Finlayson, Moyra Tillot, Wendy Cashin, Wendy Crouch. Also in attendance were past staff members Doug Rose, Gordon Shaw and 1978 Principal Sr Veronica Lawson.

Please note: List may be incomplete as not everyone who attended provided registration information.



CLASS OF 1988

30 YEAR REUNION

The song that topped the charts in 1988 was by Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes and it perfectly describes the Class of 1988 – 30 reunion because when asked, this cohort exclaimed that they had *“The Time of My Life”*

On Saturday 21 April, 2018 at 4pm the Class of 1988 began to congregate at Damascus College for their 30 Year Reunion. The event was planned with precision and dedication by the organising committee of Vonda Mathers nee Mendelson, Cathie Fitzpatrick nee Nicol and Marcelle Matthews nee Goodwin and their *“Footloose”* leader Jason Fletcher.

A huge group of past students, their partners and families (totalling more than 80) enjoyed the Welcome Reception provided by the College. The sound of past friends and students catching up was deafening but it wasn't *“Girls Just Want to Have Fun”* as this was the first group of boys to graduate at St Martin's in the Pines.

The group was welcomed to the campus by current principal Matthew Byrne and then took a moment to remember with some tears and much sadness the members of the Class of 1988 that were no longer with us. Some members of

the reunion took some quiet time in the grounds as they enjoyed the Damascus College Commemorative Walk.

Without *“Walking Like An Egyptian”* the attendees were led on a tour of the campus which many agreed was the highlight of the event. Photos and videos of the tour have been posted on the groups Facebook page so that they can *“Relax”* and enjoy the trip down memory lane again and again.

The organising committee then encouraged everyone to *“Walk This Way”* as they headed off to dinner and the after party (where they did *“Shake A Tailfeather”*) at the Ballarat Yacht Club.

The Class of 1988 Reunion was a *“New Sensation”* for many who had never attended a reunion before, but the friendships that were rekindled, new connections made and *“Change In Mood”* meant that this cohort want to have their next reunion in 5 years and not 10.

Attendees of the reunion were treated to a gift bag from the organising committee that included a mixed tape of songs from the 80's.



CLASS OF 1998

20 YEAR REUNION

On Friday 20 April at 6.30pm the Class of 1998 met for their 20 Year Reunion at the Damascus College campus.

The Welcome Reception was hosted by Damascus College and was an opportunity for the past students to come together to enjoy a drink and to nibble on some food. To reminisce and look at old pictures and yearbooks from the archives. The Welcome Reception was provided by the College as an opportunity for members of the reunion group to come together and reconnect.

The Class of 1998 enjoyed catching up with past staff member Gordon Shaw. In addition to teaching many of those in attendance while they were students at Damascus, Gordon was in attendance to take a group picture before those assembled moved off and enjoyed a tour of the campus.

After leaving the College many from the 20 Year Reunion group went on to an after party at the Freight Bar.

In attendance were Susan Malthouse-Law, Alison Williams nee McTigue, Kath Boyd nee D'Arcy, Simone Keating nee Gamble, Michelle Jones, Karla Jaeger nee Grunwaldt, Jacinta Walsh, Anne Gentle nee Fuller, David Tatti, Simon Moran, Jarrod Handford, Leon Hanrahan, Amy Hucker, Claire Morris, Melissa Nunn, Laura Reus, Sarah Ross, Danni Tesoriero, Rachel Wallbank and Amy Meade nee Turnbull.

Please note: List may be incomplete as not everyone who attended provided registration information.

CLASS OF 1988 (From page 44)

In attendance were Louise Anderson, Vanessa Appleby, Megan Ashton, Sharon Bassett, Sandra Bertello, Kate Blood, Teresa Briody, Mary Bubb, Anne Buckland, Rachel Burns, Bruna Caldwell, Lisa Clark, Alison Cole, Claire Daffey, Scott Dowsley, Kate Dunipace, Cathie Fitzpatrick, Nicole Grant, Tina Gribbin, Donna Howard, Angela James, Shan Jaudzemis, Timothy Jones, Annie Kelly, Helen Kelly, Alison Lamb, Melissa Le Deux, Mandy Le Huray, Jasmine Leamer, Bindy Lees, Carolyn Maher, Amanda Manifold, Sallie Mansell, Anton Martino, Paul Mathers, Vonda Mathers, Monique McHugo, Nicole McInnes, Melissa McKeegan, Ebony McKenna, Deslee Mortensen, Naomi Newton, Pauline O'Brien, Tanya Poole, Maxine Pryor, Rachael Purcell, Libby Radikovic Crompton, Tami-Jo Richter, Leanne Seddon, Jill Spruce, Liz Stafford, Claire Stewart, Andrea Webster, Stephanie Delaney, Catherine Green, Marcelle Matthews, Mary-anne Murphy, Josephine Rutledge, Rachelle Spurr and Jason Fletcher.

Please note: List may be incomplete as not everyone who attended provided registration information.



CLASS OF 2008

10 YEAR REUNION

The Class of 2008 met for their 10 Year Reunion at the Damascus College campus on Friday 27 April at 6.30pm.

Past students were welcomed to the College by current principal Mr Matthew Byrne in the Mercy Wing Boardroom. Drinks and nibbles were served and attendees enjoyed some time getting to catch up and acquaint themselves after 10 years.

As part of the Welcome Reception at the school the alumni were taken on a campus tour where they could see the growth and development of the College. Many in attendance were surprised and excited to see how much their "old school" had grown. They enjoyed seeing familiar spaces like the "Audi" and the "Undercroft" and were impressed with the completed John Shannon Centre and the new Chapel.

The cohort from the Class of 2008 left the campus to travel into the Ballarat CBD to enjoy an after party at the Freight Bar. A feast of food was on hand when they arrived as well as a few drinks.

Many of those who attended are still "hanging out" and seeing each other on a regular basis as they move into careers in Ballarat and Melbourne but for other members of this group it was the first time they had caught up since leaving Damascus in 2008.

The 10 Year reunion for the Class of 2008 was a great success and they are looking forward to getting together again in 2028.

In attendance were Todd Brennan, Ella Britnell, Melanie Burzacott, Lucy Coxall, James Crone, Renae Cuthbertson, Jane De Lorenzo, Paige Fawcus, Sarah Fisher, Belinda Foy, Rachel Goldie, Zac Jones, Julianne Keating, Evan Kershaw, Rachel Kulavkovski, Hamish Lawrance, Michelle Leeding, Emily Lonergan, Lucy Marquand, Genna Miller, Matt Miller, Stephanie Morrill, Bradley Orr, Ashlea Pearson, Steffanie Plucke, Joshua Polson, Jake Quick, Stephanie Reid, Jayde Robson, Chelsea Ryan, Crystal Ryan, Emily Ryan, Charlotte Sapwell, Jane Smith, Renee Smith, Josh Stevenson, Dana Wade, Matt Auchettl, Brad Murray, Brad Karslake, Esse Cahir, Sam Cooper, Joel Mahar, Julie Drum, Carmel O'Shannessy, Wendy Learey nee Cashin and Gretel Heesh. Also present for the 2008 reunion were current staff members Ann Bawden, Brendan Bawden and Dan Jans as well as past staff member Gordon Shaw.

Please note: List may be incomplete as not everyone who attended provided registration information.



AFTERNOON TEA AT DAMASCUS

ALUMNI EVENT

On Saturday 21 April a small group of past students from Sacred Heart and St Martin's in the Pines (Class of 1968 – 1973) joined together for a tour of the College and to enjoy afternoon tea together.

The ladies started arriving a little before 2pm. After registering and a quick catch up the group was led on a tour of the College by the College Alumni Officer Korina Hegert.

For a few in the group this was the first time they had been back to the campus since their last day of high school almost 50 years ago. Others had attended the 50 Years of Mercy Education celebrations last year but they didn't have a chance to tour the College at that time.

All agreed that the campus is magnificent and has truly embraced the wonderful and natural bushland setting, and that the current students are very lucky to have such a beautiful and well equipped campus.

In attendance were Carmel Giles, Carlene McKinley, Kathleen Marsh nee Tolhurst, Margaret Stoneham nee Raynes, Helen Johnson nee Sawtehh, Monica Howgate nee Teggelove, Maree Mathews nee Wallis and Christine Baker nee Humphrey.

– Please note: List may be incomplete as not everyone who attended provided registration information.

STAYING CONNECTED

DAMASCUS ALUMNI

Damascus College was formed from the amalgamation of St Paul's Technical College, Sacred Heart College and St Martin's in the Pines. Past students and staff of these foundation Colleges and Damascus form our Alumni.

The purpose and aim of the Damascus College Alumni group is to:

- Create ongoing links between the College and the Alumni Community
- Engage Alumni through the provision of activities of interest to members
- Actively seek to involve its Alumni in the life of the College
- Recognise its Alumni for their contributions to the wider community, the College and its students
- Provide a means for its Alumni to provide support for the College
- Develop Alumni connections to the Damascus College Vision and Mission, the origins of the College and its Catholic tradition
- Promote benefits of Alumni membership to all current students

For further information or to reconnect as a past student or staff member [damascus.vic.edu.au/Past Students](http://damascus.vic.edu.au/Past%20Students).



connecting@Damascus

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ALUMNI NEWS

John Maher (Class of 1968) has joined with WIN News and the Ballarat Police to create a new campaign 'FATIGUE' awareness. John has been working for many years to educate on the danger of driver fatigue as the silent killer on our roads. 'FATIGUE' teaches that a "Power Nap" may save your life.

Beth O'Connor (Class of 1969) had the good fortune to be prepared for VCE music and Grade 7 Piano by Mother Carmel a gentle warm woman who clasped her little hands in her big warm ones and made her feel so comfortable and able to blossom with her music.

Now known as **Unmani** she has settled in the Wimmera with John and her two adult children and six beloved grandchildren. Unmani taught in district schools for thirty years as a primary teacher specializing in drama, dance and music education. She has also over the years followed a pathway of enquiry into being more conscious. This has led to working as a Breath Therapy practitioner. She has also studied tantra and hypnosis with the Centre for Human Transformation. She has an enthusiasm for natural birthing practices and undisturbed birth.

Currently besides running a busy studio, she is building, with help from her students, a beautiful acoustically planned circular earth studio (super adobe style) to house her beloved grand piano. She enjoys helping out with a local choir and band.

Ruth Ryan (Class of 1978) received the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM) as part of the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Ruth was a boarder at St Martins between 1977 and 1978 and went on to study Forest Science at Creswick, Victorian School of Forestry and then Melbourne University.

Ruth received the medal after 35 years of active service in both the Forest Service and CFA, where she has served as Captain of three Forest Industry Brigades and is currently Captain of the HVP Ballarat Plantations Forest Industry Brigade in CFA District 15. She has earned the respect of her peers

and has established herself as a role model for other women firefighters. She was one of the first eight females to graduate, she then joined the Forests Commission Victoria.

Her first fire season included the Ash Wednesday fires in 1983, and she has been involved in a command role in many campaign fires in Victoria, including the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

Nicole McInnes nee Flanagan (Class of 1988) was the proud recipient of the Australia Day WA Community Citizen of the Year Award presented by the Shire of Victoria Plains. The award recognises Nicole for fostering Australian pride and spirit through active citizenship and outstanding contribution to the community.

Congratulations to **Ebony McKenna (Class of 1988)** for winning at the 2018 Ruby Awards for her book 'The Girl and The Ghost'. The Ruby Awards are presented by the Romance Writers of Australia and presented in Sydney at their Awards Dinner.

Laura Burzacott (Class of 2003) is part of the very popular A Capella group Ginger and Tonic. The group is based in Melbourne and Laura has been a member for a little over 4 years.

Congratulations to **James "Skates" Frawley (Class of 2006)** as he achieved the very impressive milestone of 200 games played with Hawthorn in July.

Tarryn Harris (Class of 2012) was appointed to the rank of lieutenant by the Ballarat CFA Brigade in June 2018. This was the first appointment to this rank for a woman in 162 year history of the CFA. Her role will see her overseeing her brigades communications, organise crews during major fires and assist with recruitment drives. Tarryn has been involved with the brigade for more than seven years. She started as a junior member before working her way up the ranks.

Unmani



Sisters Anne (Ryan) Riddock (Class of 1969) and Ruth Ryan



Tarryn Harris



BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & IN MEMORY

ALUMNI NEWS



Erica

BIRTHS

Rebecca Dyer (Class of 2006) and partner Brenton welcomed their first child Erica into the world on 24 May, 2018.

Bronte Dalrymple (Class of 2015) shares with us the news of her son Hudson Rupert Calway birth. He was born on the 5 June 2018.

Rhiannon and Chris Grant (current staff) welcomed the latest member to their family on 12 April, 2018. Chelsea Ruby Shea Grant is a baby sister for Kalan, Ella, Aidan and Nolan.

Matthew Weightman (current staff), his wife Kathryn and daughter Avigail welcomed William George Weightman to their family on 19 April, 2018.



Hudson

MARRIAGES

Shannon Vinderma (Class of 1983) and Grant Carr were married on 16 June in Loch Maree, Scotland surrounded by family and friends. The couple will enjoy a delayed honeymoon in Shannon's home of Australia later in the year.

IN MEMORY

Susie Surtees died unexpectedly on 22 July, 2018. Susie was a regular and positive supporter of Damascus College as a CRT and short term replacement teacher. Susie had a great zest for life. Her daughter Janey posted a beautiful message on Facebook which included; "And while I am sure there will be a lot of grieving, I encourage you all to celebrate this vibrant, beautiful, loving, kind, sensitive, creative, intelligent woman with joy, just the way she'd have wanted it"

We remember Susie with joy here at Damascus and thank God for the richness that she brought to our community.



Chelsea



William





Class of 1966

PAST STUDENTS LUNCH

ALUMNI EVENT

Barbara Ford nee Meich a member of the Class of 1966 organised a lunch and get together at one of Ballarat's landmark restaurants, the Golden City "Gee Cee's".

The lunch was an opportunity for former students, boarders and teachers of Sacred Heart College who were in attendance from 1960 to 1966. In addition to enjoying a delicious lunch it was an opportunity to share picture and other memorabilia from that era.

A long search for past students that attended prevailed. Thanks to technology, local newspapers and bulletins, 34 were found.

The Matriculation class numbered around 54. Many had left before matriculation, some as early as Year 9 venturing into the world to begin their 'life after school!'

Sadly, among those not found it was revealed that eleven wonderful women had passed away. We also remembered the many Sisters of Mercy, our teachers who have died, may they rest in peace.

In attendance for the lunch was the brilliant Dr Therese Powell, a wonderful teacher, mentor and very special friend to us and Sr.Kathleen McGrath, our beloved class mate.

It was a wonderful get together and one we are looking at doing again very soon, at our age we can't wait 10 years for our next get together.

SAVE THE DATE

2019 REUNION DATES

CLASS REUNIONS

Class of 1969 Sunday 24 March 12.30pm

Class of 1979 Saturday 23 March 2pm

Class of 1989 Saturday 16 March 2pm

Class of 1999 Friday 15 March 6.30pm

Class of 2009 Friday 22 March 6.30pm

PRODUCTION REUNION

We are pleased to announce that in 2019 Damascus College will be hosting a reunion for past staff and students who participated in one of the College's productions.

It will be held on Saturday 19 October 2019 from 3pm to 7pm in the "Audi".

More details will be available later in 2019.

CONNECTING?

If you are thinking of or planning a reunion or a get together of your cohort from Sacred Heart, St Martin's in the Pines, St Paul's or Damascus College please let us know. Damascus College is committed to supporting our alumni and we can assist you with planning your event, providing support in contacting alumni and offering campus or Commemorative Walk tours.

Please contact your Alumni Officer

Korina Hegert at k.hegert@damascus.vic.edu.au

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