Welcome back to 2015

This issue is dedicated to the achievements of students and staff during Term 4, 2014.

Before we look back though, I would like to share with the Community, 3 important areas of focus for 2015. Our Pastoral theme is Serviam (I Will Serve). Our excellence target is Serviam (I Will Serve). Our excellence target is Serviam (I Will Serve). Our excellence target is Serviam (I Will Serve). Our excellence target is Serviam (I Will Serve). Our excellence target is "Dare to Dream". This small, but powerful, motto gives me the courage I need to dare myself to set the goals that I wish to achieve. I believe that it means to not be afraid of dreaming, to have the courage to try and work hard to achieve the goals you have set out for yourself. It shows me that to achieve what I want from life I have to strive and work hard to accomplish it. To turn a dream to reality.

Nicole Clough – Year 8

Merici’s theme of ‘Dare to Dream’ this year has applied to me in many aspects of my life. By daring to dream this year I have been inspired to be optimistic about College life and the surrounding community. The motto has encouraged me to work, my hardest to achieve good grades but not give up when I don’t. This year has been filled with many highlights: friends, carnivals, excursions and retreats are just a few examples of the amazing experiences I have had. I have loved being a part of the amazing Merici Community.

Ellen Court – Year 9

Merici 2014 has taught me to be a brighter person, build more confidence and share my opinions. But most of all, it has taught me to ‘Dare to Dream’.

Gabrielle Cox – Year 7

Our focus for 2014 had been Dare to Dream

I asked the students what this has meant to them and here are their thoughts:

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the Bring Back Our Girls campaign and the Ice-bucket challenge for Motor Neuron Disease.

The academic, cultural and sporting achievements of our students, staff and the entire school community are recognised in the following list:

- Merici received the 2014 Alderson Award for Services to People with Down Syndrome.
- 2014 ACT Chief Minister's Award for Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness – Jenny Deck Award for Support from Schools
- 2014 National Titration Stakes – Mia Gilmour and Lauren Abraham scored gold awards and Elizabeth Zonoff a very high silver: the awards are a measure of how accurate their values were. Nationally, Merici scored in the top 50 of the 165 teams.
- Canberra Area Theatrical (CAT) Awards - Holly Ross (Year 11) and Daisy O’Malley Welby (Year 10) have been nominated for best youth actress in a featured role in a play for their individual roles in ‘Hating Alison Ashley’.
- National Eisteddfod 2014 – String Ensemble received the Silver medal, Junior Band won Bronze, Senior Band won Gold.
- Helena Hodges (Year 10) received 1st prize both in her team and overall for her Flat Connections Global Project.
- Isobel D’Cruz came Runner-up in the Rotary Club of Canberra North 4-Way Speaking Test.
- Big Science Competition run by Australian Science Innovation, University of New South Wales ICAS (International Competitions and Assessment in Schools) Science Competition, National Chemistry Quiz. Some of the students who participated in one or all of these competitions received High Distinctions (10), Distinctions (35) and Merit (12) awards.
- ACT Chief Minister’s ANZAC Spirit Prize 2014 – one of the two winners was Mercedes Bowers (Merici). The prize for each student was a 13-day study tour of Gallipoli where they visited World War I commemorative sites and celebrated ANZAC Day.
- 2014 Royal Canberra Show – Fashion and Textile students won prizes in the categories of Quilts Pyjamas and Toys. In quilts: Aneet Bakshi 1st and Student Champion, Monica Tran 2nd and Reserve Champion, Victoria Blaney-Brown 3rd, Ashleigh Harris and Emily King received High Commendations. In Pyjamas: Mercedes Bowers 1st, Monica Tran 2nd, Emily Kalthofen 3rd, Aneet Bakshi and Zoe Haseler received High Commendations, Adeline Reardon and Amelia Knowles received Encouragement Awards. In Toys: Ashleigh Harris and Georgia Black received Highly Commended. Victoria Blaney-Brown and Georgia Hermans received Encouragement Awards. 2013 Year 12 students Ashleigh Meers was awarded 1st prize for her Canberra Dress, 2nd prize for Child’s dress, and the Toyota Home Sewing Award. Anglica Windsor was awarded 2nd place for her Canberra Cap. Lauren Morrison 1st place for her Child’s dress. Emily Aboud 3rd place for her decorated cushion.
- Al Gore Climate Reality Leadership Training Melbourne – successful applicant Alessandra Carrera
- Canberra Goalball Netball Competition – Year 7/8 team came 1st in the Pool, 2nd in the finals
- ASC Netball Competition – Year 7/8 came 1st in the finals
- ACT Netball Championships – Years 7/8 and Year 9/10 teams placed 2nd overall.
- Merici Volleyballers ACT Open Schools Volleyball Cup Champions
- Asian Volleyball Championships – Zoe Haseler to represent Australia in Thailand
- Australian Volleyball Team – Student selection - Tara Acton who has been named in the honorary Australian Volleyball team following the School Sport Australia Under 16 Championships
- National Cross Country Championships: Ellie Hotink, Grace Hotink, Elizabeth Drew and Elizabeth Henderson
- Elyse Lenehan (Year 11) participated in the Gold Coast Netball Carnival as a member of the Badges U16’s Australian Indigenous team. She also participated in the Australian Indigenous Schoolgirls Championships where she represented the ACT U16s team.
- Sisters Grace (Year 11) and Ellie Hotink (Year 8) have won Bronze and Silver respectively in the Australian Youth Triathlon Championships held in Queensland in March. Ellie also received an award for 2nd in the overall Scody International Triathlon Union championship series in the 13-15 year old category.
- ACT State Cheerleading Championships and NSW State Cheerleading Championships- Jess Drury, Annie Pike, Olivia Hensson, Emily Hensson, Megan Elphick, Bree Coggan and Maddie Jenkins.
- All Star Cheerleading Nationals 2014 : Olivia Hensson, Emily Hensson, Annie Pike, Megan Elphick, Jess Drury, Maddie Jenkins
- 2015 Dual in the Desert Competition in Palm Springs, USA from 27 January 2015 - 6 February 2015: Olivia Henssen, Jess Drury, Emily Henssen and Megan
- ITU World Triathlon Championships, Edmonton Canada: Grace Hotink
- International Children’s Games December 2014: Ashleigh Lawrence has been selected to represent the ACT in Shot Put at the International Children’s Games, Lake Macquarie NSW, 6 – 11 December.
- ACT 12 Years and Under Football – Cortine Denton
- National Football (Soccer) Competition – Jasmine Genovesi
- ACT Southern NSW Snow Sports Championships – Teena Campbell, Annabelle Paven, Charlotte Thompson, Imogen McLeary, Zara Noake, Nicole Lolicato, Olivia Fabrizio, Tia Willacott.
- National Snow Sports Championships – Annabella Paven, Charlotte Thompson, Nicole Lolicato, Olivia Fabrizio.
- 13th Pan Pacific Youth Water Polo Festival, New Zealand – Natalie Taylor and team won the Gold medal
- ACT Softball Competition – Year 7 and 8 Merici team (Alice Cossetto, Ellie Haseler, Sophie Coulter, Lori Fowler, Caitlin Hanna, Zoe Lee-Archer, Emily McFarland, Alyssa McInerney, Georgi Nemes, Olivia Striker, and Gracie Thom) came 3rd.
- 2014 Pizzey Cup (Tennis) Championship – Jacinta Pang and Stephanie Pang represented the ACT.

In final weeks of 2014 we celebrated our successes. The Years 10, 11 and 12 completed exams. Year 12 students attended Graduation Mass and Awards Ceremony and we have also had a wonderful celebration with Year 12 students and their families at the Formal held at Old Parliament House – we are definitely going to need a bigger venue this year. Year 10 students gathered for their Celebration Mass and Award Ceremony after having completed a week of service in our community. In the last week the remaining students gathered for a moving and prayerful Advent Mass plus an entertaining concert and disco. It is opportunities like these that allow us to spend time in thanksgiving to our Creator God for the many joys we have each been blessed with at Merici College.

“Have confidence and strong faith that God will assist you in everything, be convinced God will never fail to provide for all your needs.” St Angela Merici
We decided to take upon this role as it required year group, Avneet Bakshi and Karen Reyes. During this week, with two other girls in my group, we were building a more compassionate society.

It gave us the chance to expose ourselves to real world experiences where we were able to talk to new people and develop our own confidence and skills as a servant leader.

Some students chose to return to their old primary schools to assist teachers during this very busy time of the year. Other students chose to work with the 4-legged variety; animals in rescue organisations. However, most students worked in agencies which directly connected with the under privileged members of our community. It was such a rewarding learning experience for the girls.

**SOME REFLECTIONS**

During the ‘Year 10 Christian Service Learning Week’ at Merici College, all Year 10 Merici girls were required to volunteer at an agency in Canberra from Monday the 24th of November to Friday the 28th of November.

It was essential that all Year 10 Merici students undertook the initiative and responsibility to approach a placement for Christian Service during this week. This was to encourage us to lead the way in giving back to the community and ensuring that we were building a more compassionate society.

It gave us the chance to expose ourselves to real world experiences where we were able to talk to new people and develop our own confidence and skills as a servant leader.

I personally decided to work at the head office of ‘St Vincent de Paul Society’ in Deakin, during this week, with two other girls in my year group, Avneet Bakshi and Karen Reyes. We decided to take upon this role as it required us to undertake the critical task of scanning and naming important archival documents. We agreed to commit our community service at this agency as all three of us had completed the elective, Business Administration, this year therefore were familiar with this sort of task.

Having this wonderful opportunity to complete community service at ‘St Vincent de Paul Society’ was an amazing experience. I received the chance to work in an office-like atmosphere where we felt honoured especially when we were commended by the staff members.

I felt highly rewarded when we were told that our selfless acts of kindness were contributing a great deal towards the progress of ‘St Vincent de Paul Society’ where we were actually helping the wider community in the long term. By completing small tasks, it really helped the employees to concentrate on other important projects involving the poor and homeless.

All our hard work of scanning numerous files truly paid off when we were asked to help set up and decorate the Christmas tree at the end of the week. Setting up the Christmas tree was a fun experience where we were able to lighten up the workplace with colourful and bright decorations. We reflected on the time we spent dedicating our time for others in our community.

I had a great time utilising this school week, after our exams, to go out and help our community. I felt truly blessed that I was doing numerous tasks that involved decreasing the burden of responsibility off other people’s shoulders to ensure that we are making our world a better place for everyone. The experience of volunteering at ‘St Vincent de Paul Society’ will always remain as a memorable time and we will be imbued in my heart forever.

**Nisha Gupta, Year 10**

I completed my Christian Service Week at my grandparent’s home. I assisted my grandmother who is the carer for my grandfather. Some of my jobs included helping prepare food and cut it up, cleaning around the house, and helping her with the shopping and gardening work that she could not complete.

I also contributed in helping with my grandfather who has a disability so he can’t move much on his left side. I assisted him with his daily exercises, helped with shopping, and the chores he can no longer do, for example cleaning the ceiling fans, cutting the lawn and also getting in and out of the car, assisting him in his wheelchair and walking with him.

I also learnt about a variety of different community services for elderly and people with a disability. These included Meals on Wheels (meals delivered to people who are unable/unfit to cook or get their own meals), community transport (which drives people to their appointments and social outings), Telecross, Red Cross (calls elderly people who live on their own each morning to see if they are okay) and home modification service (that provides people with ramps and rails).

I learnt this through my Nan who set me questions about which services assist people who are aged or disabled to help them stay in their own home.

Through assisting my Nan and Pop I realised how frustrating it can be for a person to become disabled and not do the things that they could do before, and I also learnt how important volunteers are to help with all these important organisations.

**Djanya Chalmers**
Other Ethos
Christian Service and Masses
NAPLAN 2014
While NAPLAN (the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy) has been the source of some controversy among educators and parents, it provides very useful information as long as we know how to look at the results. Schools approach NAPLAN results in two ways – at the level of the individual student, and at a whole-school level.

Parents necessarily look at NAPLAN results in terms of their individual children. This type of analysis can also be used by teachers, who have access to the complete results of every student. This allows us to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in our own classes, and to identify students who have performed above or below expectations and may therefore need some particular attention.

However, a great strength of NAPLAN is that it provides a big-picture perspective. As a national test undertaken by a vast cohort of students, it provides valuable data by which a school can track its own performance over time, as well as the effect of programs, changes or interventions that have been implemented.

One of the most important metrics provided by NAPLAN is that of student growth. A student’s growth represents their improvement in skills and knowledge, and is calculated as the difference between their scaled scores in two consecutive tests (e.g. numeracy in Years 7 and 9). As a secondary school, it is of most value for Merici to focus on the growth shown by students between Years 7 and 9.

For each NAPLAN aspect (i.e. numeracy, spelling etc.), each student’s growth is compared against a measure called ‘expected growth’. This value is calculated by the NSW Department of Education and Training using data from NSW and the ACT. The expected growth value for each student depends on their previous results (see side box), and expected growth is greater for students who started in lower bands. In other words, a student who achieved a lower score in Year 7 has a higher expected growth value in Year 9 than a student who achieved a higher score in Year 7.

This is partly a reflection of the fact that lower-achieving students have more catching up to do, but it is also partly an artefact of the test itself. Because NAPLAN must cater to the entire range of abilities in the Australian student population, it is not particularly good at differentiating the students in the highest bands. Low growth in a high-end student is therefore not automatically a cause for concern, but would have to be put in the context of other assessment evidence. In fact, this is important to note in general: while NAPLAN does provide us with useful data, it is only a single snapshot of a student’s progress. When evaluating an individual student it cannot serve as a substitute for the accumulated evidence of the student’s overall assessment throughout the year.

So how does Merici fare? A good place to start is to compare the average score of our Year 7 cohorts to that of the ACT. In all literacy aspects (reading, spelling, grammar and punctuation, and writing), our average scores in Year 7 are above the ACT average, and in almost all cases are also above the ACT girls’ average. In numeracy, our average Year 7 score matches the ACT average and is above the ACT girls’ average.

Expected Growth
Until 2013, expected growth was recalculated each year by the NSW DET for each cohort of students. From 2014, sufficient data has been collected to allow expected growth to be confidently set at a particular value (relative to each student’s starting score). This means that schools now have a stable benchmark against which to track progress.

How is expected growth calculated?
Example: expected growth between Year 7 and 9 in numeracy.
All students who completed the Year 9 numeracy test are grouped according to the scaled score they achieved in their Year 7 numeracy test. For each of these groups, the average growth between Year 7 and 9 is calculated. 0.2 of a standard deviation is subtracted from this average, and the resulting value is assigned as the ‘expected growth’ for Year 9 students who achieved that score in Year 7.

Occasionally we have an anomalous year: our 2012 Year 7s were such a year, generally showing slightly lower averages relative to the ACT.

This demonstrates that most of our Year 7 cohorts start at Merici from a position of relative strength. Do they then show satisfactory growth during their years with us?

The data shows they do. This year’s data shows that our students’ average growth between Year 7 and 9 in numeracy, reading and spelling matches the average growth for girls across all ACT schools, while in writing and grammar & punctuation, they show greater growth than the ACT girls’ average.

Of course, within these average values hide students who have shown much greater growth, or who have shown negative growth. While we are pleased by the positive overall message from the data, we continue to work on identifying these students who need special intervention. This brings us back to the two functions of NAPLAN: the big picture, and the individual analysis. By making use of both of these strategies, Merici will continue to strengthen its literacy and numeracy programs to cater for students across the full range of abilities. There are a number of strategies that you can use to help your daughter maintain and improve her literacy and numeracy skills. We will include regular suggestions for these strategies in school publications next year, so keep an eye out for them. In the meantime, here are some suggestions for the holidays. Encourage your daughter or work with her to:

- make lists of things do or write instructions, including directions to a destination;
- recount special holiday events in a journal;
- write creative stories or poetry and look for online publishers;
- join a local library or create a family book club;
- use time zones to calculate the best time for an overseas Skype call to relatives;
- in the supermarket, use the unit price (e.g. price per 100g) rather than the whole item price to identify best buys for a particular item;
- read the newspapers, particularly articles that include graphs or infographics, and discuss what they mean;
- play word games such as Scrabble, Up words, Pictionary, Boggle, and practice fast mental arithmetic in adding up the scores.

Dr Kathryn White (Numeracy Officer)
Mrs Helen Maybin (Literacy Officer)
YEAR 12 ACADEMIC AWARDS

We warmly congratulate all graduates of our 2014 Year 12 cohort. At our Year 12 Awards Ceremony we recognised the significant achievements of students who finished their senior years with the highest course score (Tertiary) or highest grade point average (Accredited), above a minimum standard, over the course of four semesters of study.

YEAR 12 ACCREDITED – ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COURSE AWARDS

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<th>COURSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Taylor Gallagher</td>
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<td>General Mathematics</td>
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<td>Visual Art</td>
<td>Claire Mifsud</td>
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<td>Photography</td>
<td>Natalie Harper</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Taylor Gallagher</td>
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<td>Sport Fitness &amp; Administration</td>
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YEAR 12 TERTIARY – ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE COURSE AWARDS

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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Elizabeth Zoneff</td>
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<td>Dance</td>
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<td>Mathematical Methods</td>
<td>Mia Gilmour</td>
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<td>Courtney Towner</td>
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<td>Earth Science</td>
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<td>Imatakopate Gina</td>
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<td>Legal studies</td>
<td>Jacquilin Boyd</td>
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<td>Theresa Tran</td>
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<td>Beginning Chinese</td>
<td>Jessica Howard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing Italian</td>
<td>Sarah Melis</td>
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<td>Lauren Abraham</td>
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<td>Chante Swart</td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>Piette Roberts</td>
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<td>Fashion Design and Textiles</td>
<td>Lauren Morrison</td>
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<td>Caitlin Semmler</td>
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<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Samantha McGilvray</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise Science</td>
<td>Celia Cossetto</td>
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**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**THE HEAD OF JUNIOR SCHOOL**
**Mrs Megan Keogh**

The Heads of Junior School, Senior School and Mission & Community are part of the Leadership team of the College. These positions work closely with the College Executive Team (Principal and Deputy Principals) and Management Team (House and Studies Coordinators). Their duties are:

- Work with House Coordinators, students, parents, staff and relevant outside agencies should significant pastoral care issues which require a team approach arise.
- Initiate and support student welfare programs for students in special circumstances eg with specific learning needs or chronic illness.
- Co-ordinate Year 7-9 Group level activities, Information Evenings or Parent sessions.
- Ensure that students are in the academic program that best suits their needs.
- Liaise with the BSSS and ACT Government to meet regulations and curriculum requirements.

**THE HEAD OF SENIOR SCHOOL**
**Mr Phil Coe**

- Work with House Coordinators, students, parents, staff and relevant outside agencies should significant pastoral care issues which require a team approach arise.
- Initiate and support student welfare programs for students in special circumstances eg with specific learning needs or chronic illness.
- Co-ordinate Year 10 – 12 Group level activities, Information Evenings or Parent sessions.
- Ensure that students are in the academic program that best suits their needs.
- Work with Studies Coordinators to review and maintain consistent policies regarding student submission of academic work.
- Liaise with the BSSS and ACT Government to meet regulations and curriculum requirements, as the Year 10 Certification Officer and BSSS Moderation Coordinator.
- Be a point of call for the Attendance Office and Reception to refer parents with education queries.

**THE HEAD OF MISSION AND COMMUNITY**
**Mrs Maria Tolfree**

- Promote the strong Catholic identity of the school in the immediate areas of curriculum, teaching and learning, pastoral care and associated policies and procedures.
- Liaise with counsellors.
- Ensure adequate provision is made for the counselling and management of students requiring special assistance.
- Work with the Executive Team, Leadership Team, House Coordinators and Departments to prepare liturgies and Masses and articulate a clear sense of the role of liturgy in the context of the College’s mission.
- Nurture the sacramental life of the College.
- Administer the liturgical program efficiently and proactively including coordination of major College liturgies.
- Oversee the coordination of whole school and/or significant calendar events.
- Develop and implement the College Christian Service learning program.

**THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL LEARNING**
**Dr Ann Cleary**

The Deputy Principal Learning role is to lead and support College initiatives in Teaching and Learning. Their main duties are:

- To work with staff to achieve quality teaching and learning, promoting strategies that are student-centred and create a positive learning environment (eg growth mindset).
- Oversee course development, including the transition to the Australian Curriculum and formal evaluation in all departments.
- Initiate, develop and implement policy in relation to curriculum, teaching & learning, assessment & reporting.
- Oversee the development of the College timetable.
- Oversee the annual production of Students handbooks.
- Liaise with the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS), ACT Government – Education Directorate and Catholic Education Office (CEO) to meet regulations and curriculum requirements.

**THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT**
**Mrs Trazel Scott**

The Deputy Principal Development role is to lead and support College initiatives in Pastoral Care and Wellbeing of Student, Staff and Families. Their duties are:

- Work with staff to develop specific programs relating to student welfare for the whole community in response to student and community needs (eg drug education).
- Oversee the updating of the Staff Policies, Relief Teaching Handbook, Staff Duty Statements and Selection Criteria.
- Promote, implement and approve professional learning opportunities for staff.
- Initiate, develop and implement policy relating to student and staff wellbeing and student staff attendance.
- Develop College Calendar and oversee the production of the Student Planner
- Liaise with Catholic Education Office (CEO) to meet regulations and requirements.
- Articulate College vision in relation to Pastoral Care in relevant community forums.
ALUMNI ….. RENEWING CONNECTIONS

On Saturday 18 November, the College community welcomed over 100 ex-students to an Alumni Soiree. School tours were conducted which presented ex-students with an opportunity to see first-hand how the College has changed since their graduation.

As they walked down the school corridors, the ex-students reminisced about their classrooms, their teachers and their friends. All had one thing in common, they were all “Merici girls and boys” and all had contributed to the growth of the College and its history. Mrs Loretta Wholley, Principal extended her thanks to the ex-students for coming along to the Soiree. “We are pleased to have over 100 ex-students here today. Our Alumni provides a link to the College for you, our past students, and also provides a sense of community. Over the last 55 years we have welcomed many faces through the College doors and we would like to renew our connection with you”, said Mrs Wholley.

The restaurant was buzzing with excitement as old friends reconnected. For some, many years had passed since their last contact, for others their visit to the College was the first after their graduation. There were students from all year groups, ranging from 1964 through to 2013. Graduates from the Class of 1964 had, earlier that day, attended a luncheon reunion and then came along to the College for the Soiree. Yearbooks were on display and images from 1959 to 2013 were scanned and presented in a PowerPoint. Each Alumni member also received a commemorative lapel pin.

This event was a time for all the students to reflect on their school days, to celebrate their achievements and to be a part of a very special community. A prayer was offered which included Anne Scollon (Class of 1964 graduate), Helen Beasley (representing the parent community), Laura Withers (representing the staff group), Eva Schroeder (Class of 1981 graduate and her daughter is a current student at Merici) and Purdy Coxon (current Year 12 Merici student). This symbolised the coming together of all spectrums of Merici’s life, its history, past, present and future.

During the evening two students from the Class of 1989 ventured into the corridors in search of a piece of history that they had created during 1988 at the College. With the assistance of Mr Adrian Heim, College Business Manager, the students found their way to the Drama Staffroom where they pointed up at the manhole. Mr Heim obliged the students by taking down the manhole cover only to discover that the two students had written on the back. It was clear that the students were very excited to find that their handwritten messages were still legible. This piece of history reaffirms the connection that all of Merici’s ex-students have with the College.

The present College Board, staff, parents and students of Merici College welcome all ex-students and their families to visit the College. We would also welcome updates on ex-students achievements and accomplishments so that we can share your experiences with our school community. Please do not hesitate to contact Ros Parisi, Public Relations Manager on email ros.parisi@merici.act.edu.au or telephone 02-6243 4178 if you would like more information on registering for Alumni membership.
Expressive Art Exhibition

Expressive Art Exhibition
Merici awarded the 2014 ACT Chief Minister’s Awards:
Jenny Deck Award for Support for Schools

On Thursday 13 November, Merici College students and staff were awarded the 2014 ACT Chief Minister’s Award for Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness - Jenny Deck Award for Support from Schools.

Jenny Deck was a fun-loving and creative woman who died in October 1986, but then gave life to others through organ donation. The award was presented to Merici Students Mercedes Bowers and Dana Ryan by ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher MLA, at the formal presentation at the ACT Legislative Assembly. Students then met Mrs Shirley Deck, Jenny’s mother and spent time in conversation with her to hear about her story.

The President of Gift of Life, David O’Leary, congratulated the Merici school community on this wonderful achievement. “The Jenny Deck Award for Support from Schools has been awarded to the students and staff of Merici College. The students and staff have been enthusiastic participants at Gift of Life’s DonateLife Walk each year. Their continuing strong involvement - over 2000 students in 2014 - helps to create the wonderful atmosphere that makes the Walk such a great success and a national media event during DonateLife Week.

The support by the girls of Merici College for the objectives of organ and tissue donation reflects the sound educational grounding being imparted by the College in these women of the future. Their involvement in the Gift of Life DonateLife Walk demonstrates the values of compassion, generosity, community well-being, and social justice. These are the values we need across our society so that the lives of many more Australians can be saved or improved through organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Merici College, through their joyful and exuberant participation in Gift of Life’s DonateLife Walk, sets an example of support for an important cause. It inspires other schools and colleges to do the same; it is an example to the broader Australian community.

“The students and staff of Merici College are worthy recipients of the 2014 ACT Chief Minister’s Awards in the category of the Jenny Deck Award for Support from Schools”.

David O’Leary, President, Gift of Life Incorporated

Mrs Loretta Wholley
Principal
Sweeten someone’s Christmas

In 2014 the Merici College community decided to ‘Sweeten someone’s Christmas’ by donating food to the Yellow Van and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Year 7-9 students came together and donated the ingredients which were then used to make shortbread, almond crescents, Christmas puddings and panforte. These items were then packaged up, labelled and donated to the Yellow Van, who will give them out to Canberra families this Christmas. Year 10-12 students donated sweets and treats which the St Vincent de Paul Society will use to make Christmas hampers for Canberra families.

This act reflects the goodwill of the Merici College community and how our students are willing to give to those less fortunate than ourselves. Christmas can be a time when families come together to not only open presents, but to share a meal together. The Social Justice group decided that it would mean a lot to those Canberra families less fortunate than our own to be able to share some sweet treats together over Christmas.

The following Year 8 students reflected on their involvement in the process of preparing goods for the Yellow Van:

“Cooking the food was very enjoyable because it meant that around the Christmas season, people will be given something to enjoy, if they weren’t able to ordinarily enjoy such a treat”, Madeline Guihot.

“It was nice to be able to contribute to someone in the community by helping make their Christmas sweeter”, Emma Webb.

“It makes it more fun and meaningful to be involved in the process, rather than just donating goods”, Hannah Mason.

Food rescued by the Yellow Van is provided to a broad range of agencies including domestic violence refuges, disability support services, homeless shelters, youth drop-in centres, mental health support groups, and other programs assisting those who have financial difficulties. It means a lot for the members of the Merici College community to be able to contribute to the Yellow Van’s monthly rescue of over 20 tonnes of good food, so that people in need can benefit this Christmas.

The Vinnies Christmas Appeal reminds us every year of the generosity of our students and families. By offering snacks, drinks and desserts, we are able to continue to help those who are struggling and hopefully sweeten someone’s Christmas.

Kyla Firman
Social Justice Facilitator

On Friday 7 November 2014, Zufi Emerson, Year 12 student, attended a special morning tea held at the Parliament House to celebrate National Adoption Awareness Week where she met the Prime Minister, the Honourable Tony Abbott MP, at the morning tea.

Zufi is the Youth Ambassador for the organisation Adopt Change, which aims to raise community awareness, encourage reform, and empower all Australians to engage with issues affecting adoption. Speaking from personal experience, Zufi believes that adoption truly follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - that it is the best interest of children to be a part of a loving family. She believes that every child deserves to feel loved, and feel like they have a home where they belong. We congratulate Zufi on her achievements and her extraordinary involvement with Adopt Change.
Each year, the Royal Australian Chemical Institute (RACI) coordinates the Titration Stakes for secondary schools across Australia. A titration is an analytical technique used by chemists to accurately determine amounts and concentrations of chemicals and is frequently used in industry and research. It requires a high degree of skill, patience and fine attention to detail.

The ACT regional competition is hosted each year by the ANU’s School of Chemistry and is always enthusiastically organised by Dr Mark Ellison, the first-year teaching convenor. Schools and colleges from across the ACT send teams of three students, who have 1 ½ hours to determine the concentration of an acid solution. Each student has a different solution to analyse, but their results are combined to give a team result. The closer their final results are to the true values, the better the score for the team.

Historically, Merici sends a couple of teams of Yr 12 students to this competition. This year, we had Mikaylah Fogarty, Sandra Refuerzo and Chante Swart in one team, and Lauren Abraham, Mia Gilmour and Elizabeth Zoneff in another, with the girls putting in a number of after-school hours for training. The competition was held in August, and 32 teams from schools all over Canberra turned out. The girls returned excellent results: Miky, Sandra and Chante came 14th, and Lauren, Mia and Elizabeth came 4th. As one of the top ten teams, these three were through to the finals.

Because of the difficulty of assembling in one location all the teams from across Australia who progress to the finals, RACI prepares the samples to be analysed centrally and then sends them out to the various states. The analysis task for the finals is trickier and more time-consuming, and the students are given three hours to finish all their calculations and report on the mass of a sample to the nearest 10 000th of a gram.

The ACT finals were held on the evening of 27th October, with teams from Merici, Marist, Girls’ Grammar, Canberra College, St Mary MacKillop, Burgmann and St Francis Xavier competing. In an outstanding performance, the Merici girls were awarded ACT champions. Individually, Mia and Lauren scored gold awards and Elizabeth a very high silver: the awards are a measure of how accurate their values were.

When RACI combined all the results nationally, Merici scored in the top 50 of the 165 teams who reached the national finals. I am very proud of the effort and care the girls put into their work, and they deserve this accolade. Congratulations!

Dr Kathryn White.
It was Friday 21st of November when the Year 8 and 9 Chinese classes sacrificed some of their precious sleep in order to arrive early for the bus. They would be going to Nan Tian temple for 24 hours to experience the mystical life of a monk. Upon arriving, the Year 9 girls promptly proclaimed that they were in China, and thus the Chinese experience began.

The temple was huge, red, golden and magnificent.

We began our first day with a vegetarian lunch (the monks do not eat meat) of a cauliflower stir-fry, fried rice and spring rolls. We were then given an official tour of the temple. Nan Tian Temple, we found out, was the largest temple in the southern hemisphere. We went to see Guan Yin (Kuan Yin – the Buddha of Compassion) who has a thousand hands and eyes. In the temple museum, we saw Buddha statues carved out of jade stone and one is covered in gold leaf which was a gift from Thailand.

After the tour, we were taught calligraphy by a soft-spoken monk. She taught us the importance of good posture, having a correct grip on the brush and a calm mind when doing Chinese calligraphy.

After the calligraphy session, we learned about meditation. Meditation is an important part of a monk's life, as this is the time where they calm their minds and 'cleanse' it of any negative thoughts. There are actually three types of meditation: walking, standing and sitting. In fact, the nun told us that meditation can happen any time.

In the evening, we took part in a Tea Chan Ceremony. Performing the tea ceremony also requires a calm mind and a level of patience. We brewed the same tea 'biscuit' three times, each for a different length of time to bring out the full flavour and emotions brought out by the tea. While the tea was brewing we prayed for it to appreciate it. Everyone got the chance to brew and serve the tea to each other.

Bright and early at 6:10 am on 22nd November, we went out to watch the Drum and Bell ceremony in the Main Shrine. Inside the shrine, there were five huge Buddha statues and 10,000 mini Buddha statues lining every inch of the walls. The large number of Buddha statues indicates that Buddha is all around us all the time.

After the Drum and Bell Ceremony, it was the morning chanting, in which all the monks had gathered and were chanting almost illegible words in complete harmonisation. Even though, we didn't understand a word, the chanting was really peaceful.

While the sun rose, we performed Tai Chi with a monk guiding us through a set of actions that were performed in a gentle and slow motions that emphasise on inhalation and exhalation.

The whole experience was extremely peaceful and expressive. It was fantastic, fun and full of exceptional events.
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**CERTIFICATES OF LANGUAGE COMPETENCE 2014**

CR = credit  DI = Distinction   HD = High Distinction
First mark is for Listening, second is for Reading
Cert 1 is only listening
School cuts down trees, writes on them and then throws them away.

Not anymore. In Term 4 of this year, Merici made the decision to switch to recycled copy paper. Easy, right? Just go to the stationary shop, look for the words “Recycled Paper” and you’re as green as Al Gore on a bicycle in Denmark. Well actually, the decision was a little more complicated than that. When you look closely, simple choices to be more sustainable are actually cloaked in complexity. This story reveals some of the dilemmas Merici faced in making its white copy paper, green.

We know that losing forests is bad. It’s bad for orang-utans, lost tribes, tree huggers and generally all living things on the planet. Deforestation is one of the leading causes of climate change accounting for around twelve per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Deforestation happens in part to meet our enormous demand for paper. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certifies paper to make sure that it has come from sustainably harvested timber not clear felled forests. They put their logo on the paper we should make sure that it has come from sustainably harvested timber or recycled paper with a few uncertainties?

Then there are social consequences. Much of the timber used for paper comes from developing countries such as Indonesia and Brazil. In some places, farmland is acquired by large corporations for plantation timber, displacing whole communities but then plantations sequester large amounts of greenhouse gases. In other places, cleared forests become farm land providing livelihoods for many people but at the cost of lost biodiversity. Sometimes indigenous communities living in forests become displaced by logging practices too and occasionally, poor logging, milling and pulping practices contaminate waterways that villages rely upon. Often these are the practices of illegal loggers with no rights to the land. Fortunately, the FSC ensures none of this happens in FSC certified products.

At Merici, we’re not ones to compromise on our standards so this term we introduced paper that is 100% recycled and FSC certified. It is also certified as carbon neutral so the benefits of recycling aren’t lost in the energy used to make the recycling happen. It is undoubtedly more expensive – twenty-five per cent more expensive in fact but we know it’s worth it. Our next challenge? Reduce our paper use by twenty-five per cent. I’m looking forward to it.

Phill Raso
Sustainability Officer

Merici College Growers Tasty Tomato Sale

Merici College Year 9 and 10 Sustainability students propagated over 800 tomato seedlings this year, mostly from seed saved by the Year 10 students. Saving tomato seed was an assessment task for Year 10 students in Semester 1. They had to select their favourite tomato from the Merici Kitchen Garden and they learned how to save the seed. Ripe fruit was harvested and the jelly containing the seeds squeezed out into a bowl. A small amount of water was added then this was left in a labelled jar with a lid for 2-3 days until a foam formed on the top. The foam, which is a sign of beneficial fermentation that acts on the sticky gel surrounding the seeds that prevents germination, was scooped off and the seeds thoroughly washed in a sieve. Then the seeds were left to dry, out of the sun. Seeds were then stored in labelled, dry containers. Fourteen varieties were grown: Amish Paste, Aussie Red, Black Krim, Cherry tomato, Gallipoli, Green Zebra, Money Maker, Mortgage Lifter, Red Pear, Roma, Sweet Bite 100, Tigerella, Tommy Toe and Wapsipinicon Peach.

Seedlings were sold on Saturday the 25th of October at the School in the student car park near the Kitchen Garden. The sale began at 8am and some early customers offered to help us set up! Students working at the sale were amazed as eager growers asked a range of questions and bought seedlings. We sold out by 9.30am having sold over 700 seedlings. The earnings of around $2200 will be reinvested in the Merici Kitchen Garden. Some of each of these varieties are now growing in the Merici Kitchen Garden ready for eating and seed saving in 2015.

Fiona Buining

Sustainability Officer
**Year 7**

**Integrated Humanities End of Semester Activities**

Year 7 students have been kept busy with a number of activities to finish the year.

**Greek Feasts and Outstanding Olympians**

Ms Mickleburgh, Mrs Thorne, Mrs Firman and Ms Fraser’s classes all studied Ancient Greece this semester. Students spent the last two weeks researching the Ancient Olympics and completing a number of activities in groups of 8-9 students. Each group was allocated an Ancient Greek city-state. They had to: design a poster about their city-state; write a song glorifying their city-state and famous Olympic athlete; write a program for the Ancient Olympics; design a costume for their city-state (realising, of course, that in the Ancient Olympics only Greek men were allowed to complete and they competed in the nude); and make up a quiz on the Ancient Olympics.

Students then brought in food to share for a banquet. Some of the foods they shared were meat and vegetable platters, olives, figs, salads, cheeses, breads, fruit, and honey cakes. They were surprised to learn that the Ancient Greeks ate similar food to Greeks today but did not have many foods such as tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and bananas which have become an important part of modern cooking. Ancient Greeks also did not have sugar and sweetened their food with honey which is much healthier than the high sugar content in many foods today. Of course, students who represented the Spartans were granted special dispensation not to eat Spartan food. Being tough warriors their main dish was supposed to be a black stew made by boiling pigs’ trotters, blood, salt and vinegar. Teachers were very impressed by the effort that all students made researching and preparing their food. And the students definitely enjoyed the eating part!

The students also had fun representing their city-states in a modified version of the Olympics. Mrs Firman and Ms Fraser’s classes were lucky to be able to hold the Olympics outside in sunny weather. There were events such as the stade (one length of the Olympic field and the origin of the word stadium), javelin, discus and some novelty events. The most entertaining of these (especially for the teachers) was the relay race in ‘armour’, which involved whole teams racing the length of the field. Instead of passing batons they changed armour with their team mates. Ms Mickleburgh and Mrs Thorne’s classes were not as lucky with the weather and were forced indoors due to a ferocious storm. With some quick and highly creative thinking they modified the events and students participated in the handstand cup, crab walks, the armour relay and a fashion parade. Many students commented on how much fun they had and how much they learnt about the Ancient Olympics.

**Ms Bowen’s Class: Rinsing The Blood Off Their Togas**

In Week 8 of Term 4, Ms Bowen’s Integrated Humanities class experienced practical activities regarding Ancient Roman times. They started the events with a Roman banquet. The girls dressed in Roman togas, and did their hair and makeup in traditional Roman styles. They then enjoyed an array of Roman foods, including an early form of pizza, a fruit and nut snack, and even some baked dormouse! (Unfortunately they could not get their hands on mouse, and had to alter the recipe a little.)

For two weeks, half of the class had been practising their roles for the 1960’s play, ‘Rinse the Blood off my Toga’. They dressed to suit their character, practiced their lines for the final time, then it was show time! The play went off without a hitch, and all the actors, stage crew, teachers and audience (Ms Fraser and Mrs Firman’s classes) were delighted with the final product.

**By Kaitlin McClory**

**Ms Keogh’s Class: Walking Like An Ancient Egyptian**

Water, Water Everywhere

As well as studying Ancient Civilisations this semester, Integrated Humanities students have been completing the new National Curriculum unit, ‘Water in The World’. After learning about water shortages and problems with access to clean water in many countries overseas, the students raised money to purchase a well for a school in a developing country. Girls in developing countries frequently do not go to school because they have to walk up to 20km a day to carry water for their families. Integrated Humanities students now realise what a privilege it is to be able to attend school, especially when so many girls around the World are denied that privilege.

The semester ended with a visit to Big Splash. The students had learnt about the cultural and aesthetic value of water to Australians and they were excited to experience this first hand in their visit to the pool. It proved to be one of the most popular learning experiences of the year and a happy and relaxing way to end a very productive year in Integrated Humanities.

**Ms Chris Fraser**

Integrated Humanities Facilitator
At the end of the term, when all of our assessments are done, in class we usually do group tasks that are fun and educational. In the wonderful Mrs Keogh’s class, we are studying the civilisation of Ancient Egypt. We were set a task to recreate an ancient Egyptian myth in the form of a short play. There was another challenge – we had to choose our own myth. To ensure originality, no one could choose the same myth. This had become a race of time, trying to choose the myth you wanted before anyone else beat you to it. We were given several lessons to complete this task, which included making props, costumes, scripts and other tools to re-enact this myth. We also had an added incentive. The top three performances voted by the students received prizes for their effort and performance. This task required teamwork and efficiency. We all had great fun seeing the end product of each other’s teamwork, and laughed a lot. This task was the perfect balance of learning and enjoyment and everyone gained teamwork skills and learned something new about the civilisation.

Ms Chris Fraser
Year 7 Religious Education Teacher
The Merici Dance Troupe was established in July 2014 under the artistic direction of Laura Pearce.

There are currently 13 members, from year 7, 9, 11 and 12. The purpose of the Dance Troupe is to support community events whilst also promoting Merici College to the wider community. This year the students involved have performed at a variety of community events, such as: the Murrumbateman Field Day, St. Michael’s Primary School Fete, Queanbeyan Family and Community Day and Rosary Primary School Fete. The Dance Troupe have also supported College events such as: the Music Extravaganza Concert and the Art Exhibition and Fashion parade. The Dance Troupe perform a repertoire of dances in variety of dance styles, including Bollywood, Jazz, Contemporary, Musical Theatre and more. We will also choreograph dances for specific events, for example, the Fashion Parade and the Music concert. The Dance Troupe students are gaining valuable performance experience and they are encouraged to choreograph new routines for the Troupe in order to extend and update our repertoire. Early next year we anticipate performing at the Multi-Cultural Festival and the Canberra Show. We would welcome new members at any time so if you love Dance and would like to join please come along to our rehearsals after school on Thursdays.

Laura Pearce
Photos taken by Ros Parisi
Seiwa House - Welcomes, Farewells, Socialises and Fundraises

It has been a very eventful term for Seiwa House, one in which we have welcomed, farewelled, socialised and fundraised all in the spirit of peace and compassion.

We welcomed our Year 7 students for 2015 during the Year 7 Induction Day. The Year 10 students from each Pastoral Care class organised fun activities for the girls to do and gave opportunity for all the new students to mingle as they played games and created fabulous photo frames for their pastoral care photo.

In addition, we welcomed our new House Captains, Brittney Reynolds and Natalie Taylor. The girls have worked tirelessly since taking over the running of the House organising the Year 12 Farewell assembly, the return of Goodberrys as a fundraiser for our charity CanTeen as well as designing a restructure of the House Steering Committee.

As we welcomed new students, we also farewelled our Year 12 cohort for 2014. The girls attended a beautiful farewell assembly themed around the idea of family and friends. The girls were presented with a gift from the House. A candle with the new Seiwa House logo (designed by the students of Seiwa House this year) was given as a symbol of hope, family and friends as they enter the next stage of their lives. The 2014 Captains, Sarah Melis and Madison Hardgrave presented the House with a beautiful framed print of the new Seiwa House prayer (also created this year). It has taken pride of place in our display cabinet and will be used at each Seiwa occasion.

Seiwa House participated in a social event with our brother House at Marist, McMahon. We travelled to Marist College and socialised during a trivia afternoon and BBQ. The girls had a wonderful time.

Seiwa House managed to raise $2245 via a variety of activities including a sausage sizzle, two visits by Goodberrys ice cream, a photobooth and the selling of CanTeen merchandise including the famous CanTeen bandannas. The support from the whole College for this amazing charity was overwhelming with us selling out of bandannas.

The highlight for this term and this year was the House winning the College Cup. Every girl in Seiwa House contributed to the House winning this very prestigious award. It was the House goal for the past 4 years and we have finally achieved it. We look forward to working tirelessly to defend the College Cup in 2015.

Cath Amesbury
Seiwa House Coordinator
Year 10 Celebration
Mass and Awards