NAB Schools First Student Award helps Merici College to become a waste free school

A Year 10 student at Merici College, Mikaylah Fogarty, is very excited to have won a $5000 NAB Schools First Student Award. The award will support the student volunteer group, the Environmental Sustainability Team’s, partnership with Switched On Schools of AYCC ACT and give them the capacity to establish an effective recycling program at the school.

For the past semester the mentors from Switched On Schools has helped the Environmental Sustainability Team to collaborate with staff and students to design an effective recycling program for the school. The students learnt that they would need to facilitate both infrastructural and behavioural change in order to reduce the school’s waste. The entire school community feels very excited and lucky to have received the NAB Schools First Student Award as it will allow them to put a recycling station in every corridor of the school. This is a big step towards the waste free school for which they hope!
From the Principal

One day is never the same as the next! Life as a Principal is a constant challenge but, as we frequently remind our students, challenge does not have to be bad. I have the privilege of seeing students at their best and shining in their chosen pursuits, as well as working with families through stressful times.

Parents may have seen the Canberra Times article about school fees, and my follow up letter-to-the-editor (reprinted in What’s on at Merici). While the letter was focused on correcting inaccuracies in the Merici data, there is a bigger issue – the cost of sending children to Catholic Schools and the right of parents to choose where their children are educated. The current changes in state funding to non-government schools have already directly impacted schools in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdioceses. An implementation plan for the recommendations of the Gonski report has not yet been released, but all signs indicate funding will not remain at its current level in real terms. In these uncertain funding times, the College is taking a cautious approach. The Merici College Board has approved a 5% increase in school fees for 2013. While this is a rise, it is less than has been passed on in previous years. The budget includes an element of ‘belt tightening’ needed to limit the fee increase.

As a Catholic College we are committed to the education of all students regardless of any inability to meet payment of the full fee. Fee concessions are assessed each semester and when the need arises. There is a clearly articulated application process, necessary to ensure equity in dealing with requests. As government funding information becomes available in 2013 we will let you know what is happening in the non-government system and what the implications are for Merici.

On a lighter note, we were very fortunate to host our incoming Principal, Mrs Loretta Wholley, for a week from the end of Week 2. While I think there was mild apprehension on both sides, the visit gave us all an opportunity to get to know each other and for Loretta to really get an understanding of Merici – from the inside. We certainly kept her busy; from the annual Principals’ Dinner and Principals’ System Day to the Merici Music extravaganza with the magnificent ensembles, orchestras and choir, 2013 Year 7 Induction Day, meetings with all the House and Studies Coordinators and the Executive, a House assembly and being a guest at the Board meeting…. I know that Loretta will read this, but I will tell one tale and report that she was astounded by the Canteen and resolved to never bring her lunch to school!

The Archdiocesan Assembly held at Merici on Saturday 3 November was a wonderful experience for the participants and also for those of the Merici community who volunteered their time to assist on the day. The community spirit in the kitchen, with staff and students working side-by-side chopping, slicing, dicing, stirring, tipping and scrubbing was amazing. The desire to support Merici, support the Archdioceses and to support each other kept the day running so smoothly. The precision orchestration of the behind-the-scenes jobs by Ros Parisi and Virginia McLeod was an essential element of the day. Thank you to all. The frenetic activity in the kitchen was in stark contrast to the quiet reflection of the Assembly participants. With the hectic pace of our lives it is good to be reminded on occasion to pause, reflect and, as Bishop Peter Comensoli said, spend time in prayer and engage in our relationship with God.

It is also timely to reflect on the year. And what a year! Catherine Rey’s legacy of her 9 ½ years leading the College was clearly evident during the visit of the Registration Panel in Week 10 of Term 3. Their Report is not yet finalised, but I’m pleased to report that the Panel has recommended that Merici be registered for another five years. They were very impressed with the positive and supportive relationships between all members of the community. We did not present the Panel with vetted, “exemplar” students, but the pride students have for their College was clearly evident to the Panel members during their walks around the College, visits to classroom and formal student interviews. The strong and supportive Catholic identity of the College community and the genuine focus on teaching and learning, in exceptional facilities, that embrace current directions and directives in education were commended. The key recommendations were around further consolidating and linking our key teaching and learning elements: our Principles of Powerful Learning, flexible learning spaces and team teaching approaches, as well as reviewing our assessment processes. The College had already identified assessment and reporting as foci for our ongoing Internal School Review process in 2013. There will be opportunities next year for all stakeholders to be involved in discussions around these areas.

As the year closes we say goodbye to our Year 12 students. It is always a time of mixed emotions as we are saddened to lose valued members of the school community, but we look forward excitedly and expectantly to where their journeys take them. We also say goodbye to families who have been part of the Merici Community for six or more years. Thank you for sharing your daughters, from sweet Year 7s to mature young ladies, with us and for your contribution to Merici.

Due to retirements and families finishing their time at Merici there are opportunities for parents to be involved in the governance of the College through membership of the College Board. Meetings are once a term for 1-1½ hours. We thank the Board this year for their wisdom and input on new initiatives, compliance issues, feedback on the Registration application and for their strong support of the Executive during this time of transition. Parents will be given further information about the Board and the nomination process early next year.

I wish all of our families a joyous and safe Christmas break and look forward to welcoming you back, with Loretta Wholley, in 2013.

Dr Ann Cleary
Acting Principal
Thanks to the support of Vinnies Youth through Merici & Marist Colleges, we’ve been blessed with the support of some wonderful volunteers here in the Charities Marquee at Floriade. As the weekend brightened up with wide, blue, sunny skies after the rain over the past two days, these volunteers got into the Floriade spirit by dressing up and posing in our photo booth.

Over 150 volunteers from all walks of life have stepped up to assist us over the entire period of Floriade. We’ve had everyone from youth, corporate teams and long-standing Vincentians rostering on to help out. And for many, it isn’t just one occasion they’re helping out. The Merici & Marist youth are volunteering every Sunday morning of Floriade, whilst youth from St Clare’s College are volunteering every Sunday afternoon.

Along with our charity partner, The Yellow Van, we’re engaging marquee visitors with Yummi, The Yellow Van mascot, balloons and the Vinnies photo booth.

Our volunteers can’t but help get into the spirit and dress up for a photo. They bloomed beautifully with brightly coloured clothes and zany hair for the shots. A brilliant way to demonstrate to the marquee visitors how easy it is to support Vinnies and The Yellow Van in a fun, free way.

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In the winter holidays this year, I travelled to Zambia to visit my sister, who works as a health administrator at the Centre for Infectious Disease Research Zambia (CIDRZ) in the capital, Lusaka. While there, I spent a week volunteering at a school and women’s refuge in Lusaka called Chikumbuso.

The school was set up to cater for AIDS orphans and other disadvantaged children who would otherwise not have the chance to attend school. It runs classes from kindergarten to Year 6, with each class having up to fifty children of a variety of ages. It also has a craft workshop in which widows affected by AIDS – often socially ostracised – can earn a living producing bags, jewellery and clothing. Chikumbuso is a charity supported by partner organisations, donations and the work of volunteers and I was deeply impressed by the commitment and resilience of all the staff there.

The week I arrived, the Year 6 teacher, Mishek, had been taken ill and his students were supposed to revise for an upcoming Maths test. So for that week, I took the class for a few hours each morning, covering a good deal of the Year 6 curriculum in that time. We did an integer hopscotch in the playground, number patterns using stones collected from the yard, and a couple of class tournaments, pitting groups of the students – who ranged in age from about 12 to 17 – against each other.

It was an interesting change of pace to have only a blackboard as my resource, but the kids were keen, motivated and very competitive. After lunch each day we set up science experiments: weighing air, making slime, constructing kaleidoscopes and racing balloon rockets.

What struck me most about these students – as wild and energetic in the playground as any of ours – was their seriousness about the business of learning. They came to the classroom to rise above their home circumstances – complicated, unstable and difficult. This was an opportunity that was not to be wasted.

On the other hand, I was struck by how inflexible their thinking tended to be: the Zambian education system involves a lot of rote learning and little investigation. Our students here are lucky to have the opportunity to expand their thinking in creative and nonlinear ways, but there is definitely something to be learnt from the Chikumbuso students about appreciating your education.

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Rene Sutherland
Volunteer Development & Coordination Officer of St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra Goulburn

Dr. Kathryn White
Science Teacher
On Saturday 3rd November 2012, Merici College hosted *Starting Afresh from Christ*, the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn 2012 Assembly. The Assembly commenced at 9.00am and concluded at 4.30pm and was well attended with over 300 participants. The Assembly is held every year and gives members of the Archdiocesan family the opportunity to meet together in a day of inspiration and prayer. Bishop Peter Comensoli, Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney, presented two keynote addresses on *Starting Afresh from Christ* and Prayer. Monsignor John Woods, Archdiocesan Administrator, Stephen Kirk, Shane Dwyer, Deacon Matt Ramson, Cathy Ramson and Sr Ann Steenbergen presented workshops throughout the day. These workshops focused on Adoration, Repentance, Contemplation, Petition and Thanksgiving. At the conclusion of the Assembly participants received the Year of Grace resource.

The Assembly was a wonderful success due in no small part to the contributions made by many staff and students from Merici. They came along and assisted as ushers in the car parks, directing guests to the workshops, assisting the Canteen staff with set up, serving and cleaning. Special heartfelt thanks are extended to our Maintenance staff for helping with the setup of workshop areas, the Auditorium and the Canteen/Restaurant. Also to our Hospitality staff and students who worked tirelessly to prepare morning and afternoon teas and an amazing buffet lunch. An amazing job was done by all!

Ros Parisi
Public Relations Officer, Merici College

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**JOHN FLYNN HOUSE CELEBRATIONS**

On Saturday 20 October, a project that began in Semester 1 this year came to a very satisfying conclusion. Two Senior Art students have seen their work hung at St Andrew’s Retirement Village as a focal point for the celebrations and thanksgiving for the work and ministry of the Rev Dr John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission. Dr Flynn began the Royal Australian Flying Doctor Service and John Flynn House at St Andrew’s Village is full of the history of this extraordinary man.

Yolandi Swart and Caitlin Figuerido in Year 11 created paintings that encapsulate aspects of the story of Dr Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission and were very pleased and proud to talk to former Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffery AC, CVO, MC (Ret’d) who was invited to speak at the celebrations. I am very proud of both students as they took on the challenge of producing the works and have succeeded admirably in their efforts. They can now say that they have work in a private collection!

I also saw, and was able to thank, Miss Anne Radmin an ex-student of Merici College who was instrumental in setting the wheels in motion, enabling the students to rise to meet the challenge of telling aspects of a very important story.

Anne Radmin an ex-student of Merici College who was instrumental in setting the wheels in motion, enabling the students to rise to meet the challenge of telling aspects of a very important story.

Mrs Sue Birch-Marston
(Expressive Arts Coordinator)
The Duke of Edinburgh Long Trip 2012 was highly successful. We drove for a day and a half to arrive at Yathonga, a remote property on the Darling River in Northern NSW where we stayed for a week. Activities included swimming in the 42°C heat, leadership and self-development activities, various games and exploring.
**MERICI USA DANCE TOUR**

From October 1st – 11th Mrs Pearce and Mrs Laird accompanied 20 Dance students to the USA for the inaugural Merici Dance Tour.

The excited girls and staff visited New York and participated in Dance workshops at Alvin Ailey and Broadway Dance Centre and whilst in Los Angeles we attended workshops at Disneyland, The Edge and Millennium Dance Centre. The students were able to experience a diverse range of dance styles from West African to Musical Theatre, jazz and contemporary. All the Dance tutors were very professional and generous with their knowledge and expertise. The students gained valuable insight into the life of a dancer and received useful advice if they should choose Dance as a career.

We also attended two Broadway shows: *The Lion King* and *Phantom of the Opera*.

Merici College Guidance Tours included such iconic landmarks as the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, the Empire State Building, Central Park, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the 9/11 Memorial.

*Whilst in Los Angeles we visited Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, Hollywood and the Walk of Fame and Mann’s Chinese Theatre; host of the Academy Awards and many film premieres.*

We had two fun filled days at Disneyland and Universal Studios and on our last day we strolled through Olvera Street which is home to a vibrant Mexican community and then made our way to Santa Monica where the famous Route 66 ends!

We ended our tour at the Observatory which was used in the film *Rebel Without a Cause* starring the legendary James Dean. As we paused for photos with the Hollywood sign in the background a young man proposed to his fiancé – happily she said ‘yes’! It was the fairytale ending to a fantastic and memorable Dance tour.

**Laura Pearce and Liza Laird**  
*Dance Teachers*

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**YEAR 7 INDUCTION DAY**

On Friday 26th October, Merici welcomed the Year 7 Class of 2013 for their Induction Day. The girls were welcomed to the school by our new Principal Loretta Wholley, who has a vested interest in this Year 7 group as they will be the first group of girls to travel through Merici College under her governance and graduate, as Loretta mentioned, “as the Class of 2018”.

The girls were given the opportunity to mingle and get to know other girls in their House group as well as meeting Year 10 Buddies from their individual Pastoral Care classes. There was a lot of smiles and laughter as the girls participated in a variety of ‘get-to-know-you games’ and ice-breakers including the M &M game; Sorts and Mingles; Lost on a desert island and a treasure hunt around the school.

The introduction of two Year 10 buddies for each Pastoral Care class is vital in breaking down the barriers and reducing the fears of the new students. We have been told by many new students that their main concerns are “getting lost and meeting the older girls”. On this day both these fears are faced with the introduction of buddies from the older years who are entrusted to run all the activities on the day including the ‘guided’ treasure hunt. This allows all our new students to make their way around the school getting to know two older girls who will be a part of their Pastoral Care family. Merici is very proud of our vertical pastoral care system and its strength in promoting a ‘big sister’ attitude amongst our older girls who really do enjoy looking after the younger students.

The 2013 Year 7 girls got to take home a memento of their visit, having created a frame to hold their Pastoral Care class photo and shared contact details of the girls they had met on the day. The Induction Day must have been a big success as all the girls left with a spring in their step and a genuine enthusiasm to start next year, some saying as they left: “It’s been really fun today. I am the only one coming from my primary school but today I meet some people and I feel happier coming now.”

“Yeah, I really liked it. I got to meet everyone in my House and everyone seems really nice.”

“My Year 10 buddies are really funny and helped me find my way around the school. I won’t be as scared to ask for help from them now that I’ve meet them.”

“I don’t want to go back to my primary school, I just want to stay here. I’ve had so much fun.”

We look forward to once again welcoming these girls in February 2013.

**Mrs Cath Amesbury**  
*Acting Assistant Principal Student Welfare*
2012 MERICI SCIENCE SERIES

At Merici this year we were privileged to host seven Australian researchers, who donated their time to speak to students, staff, family and friends about the research happening in their labs. These talks gave us a fascinating insight into the difficulties and excitement of research in areas spanning Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Earth Science.

We kicked off the series in February with a visit to the Canberra Museum, where we were hosted by Professor Tim Senden and Dr. Gavin Young, both from the ANU, at their exhibition ‘Old Bones, New Insights’. Gavin is a palaeontologist, specialising in Australian fossils that demonstrate the transition from fish to land-based animals, while Tim is a chemist-turned-physicist who uses his 3D printer to produce replicas of tiny or fragile fossils. Tim’s specialty is the technique of x-ray tomography, in which X-rays are used to produce a 3D scan of objects, revealing details of their internal structure that would be invisible to the eye. These scans are then fed into a 3D printer to produce the replicas.

Our next speaker was Dr Kylie Catchpole, from the School of Engineering at the ANU. Kylie is one of Australia’s up-and-coming researchers in solar technology, and last year won a New Inventors award for her idea of using silver nanoparticles to improve the efficiency of silicon solar cells. Kylie gave us an excellent insight into the vast potential of solar energy in Australia, and the various directions in which her research is heading.

In May, we met Dr Russell Barrow from the ANU’s Research School of Chemistry, who studies the medicinal uses of fungi, the pheromones of plants and insects and a variety of other topics. In their work, Russell and his group use a technique where they attach an insect antenna to an electrode and expose it to a variety of chemical vapours. When the antenna comes into contact with a chemical that it is able to detect, it generates a signal which is registered by the electrode. In this way, Russell and his team are able to identify the exact chemicals used by insects and plants to communicate with each other.

Our last speaker for the semester was Dr Asaph Widmer-Cooper from the University of Sydney’s School of Chemistry. Asaph spent a good part of the last five years at Berkeley in the US, researching details of the behaviour of materials such as glasses and metallic nanocrystals. Asaph is a theoretical chemist, building computer models of complex physical systems that he and his experimentalist collaborators use to understand and predict behaviour in real materials.

We started Semester 2 with a visit from Dr Megan Hemming from the CSIRO, a plant biologist using genetic modification to produce strains of wheat that will survive the more extreme climate conditions that Australia is expected to experience in the future. Megan was at pains to explain that – far from being the glowing-mouse type of experiment that the media loves to shout about – her research is simply a faster version of traditional cross-breeding. She takes genes from strains of wild wheat that are known to be hardy but low-yielding and transplants them into high-yielding commercial wheat. In this way she and her colleagues have been able to compile an extensive library of wheat strains that are adapted to different conditions. This gives farmers the opportunity to choose a variety of strains that will suit different microclimates on their properties.

In September we hosted Professor Bryan Gaensler, head of the Centre for All-Sky Astrophysics at the University of Sydney. Bryan is an internationally renowned astronomer who was part of the team responsible for designing the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) that will be built in South Africa and Australia in the near future. Bryan’s interests and the capabilities of the SKA are both directed at observing huge areas of the sky simultaneously, and Bryan gave us an excellent feel for both the technological problems that must be overcome and the excitement inherent in such a massive project.

Our final speaker for the year was Dr. Tamsin Kelly from the University of Canberra, who is interested in toxicological forensics and drug testing. Tamsin has developed specific methods for detecting drugs in a variety of circumstances, from drug use by pregnant women that affects babies in utero to identifying the source of street drugs by analysing their composition. This topical talk also involved some discussion on the issue of Lance Armstrong!

I would like to thank Mrs Jo Aboud, the Science Coordinator, for helping to organise this series, and all the speakers for so generously giving us their time – particularly those that travelled from interstate. We hope to continue the series with a new collection of speakers in 2013.

Dr. Kathryn White
Science Teacher
MERICI’S NAPLAN RESULTS FOR 2012

NAPLAN is designed as a tool to inform parents and teachers about the progress of students in the Year 7 and Year 9 cohorts. It provides a useful snapshot of student ability that is used to look for overall trends, strengths and potential weaknesses in the student groups. This data is one source of information used to inform our planning for these particular students and in the review of our teaching programs.

Merici continues to perform well in Year 7 and Year 9 NAPLAN. Of particular note is the strength of our students’ performance in Year 7 and Year 9 Reading, Writing and Grammar & Punctuation. The percentage of Year 9 students in the top two Bands of achievement for writing and spelling exceeds the comparative data for the ACT. While our results indicate solid performances, one goal for Merici is to move more students into these upper bands across all testing areas. Numeracy is a targeted area for improvement at Merici in 2012-2013, with staff professional development in whole school numeracy, as well as a refocused Mathematics teaching program as discussed below.

School, ACT and National Mean Scale Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 7</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>543</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
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<td>573</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>599</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>605</td>
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Proportion of students at or above the National Minimum Standard

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<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 9</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</th>
<th>Numeracy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>93%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
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2013 Numeracy initiatives:

We are thrilled that our new flexible learning space will be on-line in 2013 and Mathematics students in Years 8 and 9 will have timetabling priority. Our new numeracy officer will be in place for all timetabled classes in Years 8 and 9, and they will act as a facilitator for developing cutting edge numeracy tasks and assisting Mathematics staff in the implementation of new Australian Curriculum programs across the year levels.

We know from our NAPLAN results that some of the girls who are achieving best in our junior classes here at school are not demonstrating this effectively in NAPLAN type tests, particularly in the area of visual representation, multi-step problems and analysis type questions. These are skills needed not just for NAPLAN; effective application of knowledge and higher order thinking is essential in Mathematics in the senior years.

We know that the mathematical development of teenagers happens at varying rates, as it does in smaller children. Students also develop proficiency in difference skill areas at different times. Our aim is to allow students to develop at their own pace and always to the best of their ability. We are currently developing rich resources to cater for all levels of learning. Students who are already achieving well will be further challenged and, in particular, encouraged to develop higher order analysis and evaluation skills and the creativity that forms the basis of becoming an effective Mathematician.

Trazel Scott
Assistant Principal, Curriculum
VET CONFERENCE

Paving Pathways

The VET biannual conference began with a cocktail party at the National Portrait Gallery. Needless to say there didn’t need to be any coercion in getting together a group of totally dedicated VET staff from Merici. We were there to meet the Queen and socialise over a glass of champagne.

It was a fabulous start to the VET Network Conference held at the National Convention Centre. The weather was warm and sunny and people flocked from all over the country to hear some really brilliant guest speakers.

However, before I get to the Conference, our busy week started with a lunch for representatives from Catholic Dioceses around the country, including Darwin, Perth and Adelaide. It was hosted by our own CEO leaders, Mary Dorian and Belinda Muir. The Hospitality staff provided an amazing restaurant style meal to top off their visit to Merici College.

Wednesday didn’t get any less busy. As a lead in to the National VET Conference, teachers and RTOs from around Australia had the chance to look around some of the sights of Canberra and we were lucky enough that approximately 50 people wanted to visit our Trade Training Centre. We had one hour to dazzle them….. and we did. The Hospitality staff decided to have a High Tea and it was a huge success…. as was the kitchen, garden, greenhouse and the chickens, of course!

Anyway, back to the conference. Keynote speaker, Nils Vesk entertained us throughout the day with glimpses of his life as a designer, architect and lover of all things innovative. In no time at all he had us on Facebook, tweeting our thoughts and downloading the latest movie clips.

Darren Hill, a Behavioural Scientist, was up close and personal with all of us trying to deconstruct our every thought and gesture. There was no avoidance. Technology was capturing every turn of the face and thought recognition.

Other great speakers included Jan Owen AM, CEO of the Foundation for Young Australians and a pioneer of the youth sector in Australia. She is a highly regarded social entrepreneur, innovator and child and youth advocate. She made some really pertinent points about our youth of today including et them take risks so that they can be inspirational. She outlined the capabilities the youth of today will need to succeed:

- Sustainability
- Active Well Being
- Emotional Intelligence
- Cultural Intelligence
- Asia Ready
- Work Ready
- Entrepreneurism – the ability to create jobs
- Citizenship

Justin Herald, who created Attitude Inc, a clothing brand that turned over in excess of $20 million per year concluded the conference. Amazingly he started off with only $50 to his name. His positive attitude extends to his belief in what the youth of today can achieve.

Quotes

Their [the youth of today] life isn’t like our life!
We have to reimagine Career development – 21st century skills, learn by immersion, real life experience
Our attention span today… 9 seconds!
Change your mindset to a Possibility Mindset… then cynicism is impossible!

Kerry McDonnell
Vocational Education Coordinator
“EXPLORE JAPAN” AT THE NIHONGO TANKEN CENTRE

Danielle Bewick Y8.

On the 20 September, Years 8, 9 and 10 Japanese language students went to the Nihongo Tanken Centre in Kirrawee, New South Wales. The Centre was created to give a little taste of what life is really like in Japan and caters to students from Kindergarten all the way up to Year 12.

“…it was a great day. It was extremely different from our culture, which was like a breath of fresh air!” Evie Rhodes, Y8.

Rachel McGee, Y8

Only Japanese is spoken at the centre and information is taught through different activities. Games, songs, and experiencing the culture first hand made the Centre very interesting and a memorable learning experience for our Merici girls.

“It was an amazing experience and we got to learn more about the Japanese language and culture”.

The girls participated whole-heartedly in all of the activities and much laughter was heard throughout the day. A visit to the Nihongo Tanken Centre was a great opportunity to consolidate the Socio-Cultural learning we have been doing in our classes right across the year levels.

Mrs Georgina Wemyss.
Japanese Teacher

Cultural learning we have been doing in our classes right across the year levels.

THE IROHA POEM

The IROHA Poem of Japan is famous because it is a perfect pangram, containing each character of the Japanese syllabary. Traditionally it was written with two more Hiragana which we no longer use. "wi" ち and "we" は. Can you think of an English pangram?

Meaning in English

Even the blossoming flowers
Will eventually scatter
Who in our world
Is unchanging?
The deep mountains of vanity—
We cross them today
And we shall not see superficial dreams
Nor be deluded.

Where will you find the IROHA today?
The IROHA-SAKA (the Iroha Hill) is a zig-zagging road which takes you up to Lake Chuzenji in Nikko. If you travel up the Iroha-zaka you will find one of the hiragana at each corner of the road as you ascend the hill.


POWHERFUL LEARNING IN LANGUAGES & LEARNING SUPPORT

POWHERFUL LEARNING IN LANGUAGES & LEARNING SUPPORT

POWERFUL LEARNING SUPPORT

The Learning Support Department is founded on the belief it supports all learners at Merici. To this end, we aim to provide services and access in a variety of ways. Two such areas are the hUb and the Cross Age Tutoring Program.

hUb

The Merici hUb has grown in popularity this year. Essentially an extension of the classroom, teachers can refer students to come to the hUb for a variety of reasons. A perfect place for extension work, the hUb is a quiet, private space with computers and plenty of room for laptops. Staff are on hand to advise and guide students, who can be individuals, pairs or small groups working on common projects. If your daughter would like to make use of this area, she can discuss it with her teacher.

Afternoon hUb

Many students are taking advantage of the Afternoon hUb after school in the learning Centre Monday to Thursday til 4.30 pm to get a jump start on their homework or to receive assistance from Learning Support Staff. To access this service, just contact Mrs Kyla Firman at kyla.firman@merici.act.edu.au

Cross Age Tutoring

Our Cross Age Tutoring program was another great success this year, maintaining numbers on last year. This program is a great program where students can be tutored in a number of areas by another, older student. The benefits are bilateral, the younger students are taught by great role models in the older students and the older students grow in confidence and can gain a registered unit through the program. As is often the case with one-on-one pairings, there can be some trial and error in finding personalities that work well together, but once the match is made these students take full responsibility for their meetings. We have had success in a number of subject areas. If you are interested in being a tutor or a recipient or you would like to discuss the Cross Age Tutoring Program please contact Kyla Firman or Antonietta Prosperi.

THE IROHA POEM

The IROHA Poem of Japan is famous because it is a perfect pangram, containing each character of the Japanese syllabary. Traditionally it was written with two more Hiragana which we no longer use. “wi” ち and “we” は. Can you think of an English pangram?

Meaning in English

Even the blossoming flowers
Will eventually scatter
Who in our world
Is unchanging?
The deep mountains of vanity—
We cross them today
And we shall not see superficial dreams
Nor be deluded.

Where will you find the IROHA today?
The IROHA-SAKA (the Iroha Hill) is a zig-zagging road which takes you up to Lake Chuzenji in Nikko. If you travel up the Iroha-zaka you will find one of the hiragana at each corner of the road as you ascend the hill.


POWERFUL LEARNING IN LANGUAGES & LEARNING SUPPORT

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some of the students who didn’t turn up. “It’s on the test!” they wailed.

It was a smaller class this time, so the regular students had to introduce themselves to us then we had to do the same, in full Mandarin. I swear, by the end of the day, we were fluent in introducing ourselves at least.

The lesson kicked off with a cartoon on how to order food in a restaurant. We were given the script then paired up. One of us was the waiter/waitress, and the other, the customer. Plates of ‘jiǎozi’ (dumplings), ‘shuǎzhǎyǎ’ (a hot fish dish), ‘hànbǎo’ (hamburger) and ‘kǎoyǎ’ (roast chicken) were ordered with ‘kǎlè’ (coke) as the main beverage. The prices were outrageous so the ‘customer’ had to try and lower the price.

Next was the writing tutorial. The teacher gave some people a slip of paper with something written on it in Mandarin. We had to figure out what the piece of paper said, then act it out for everyone to guess; it was hilarious.

By the end of the lesson it was 3 o’clock and almost time to leave. We took a look around the Asian studies faculty then ran into our teacher’s, old, teacher. We had to introduce ourselves again, and try to hold a conversation with no English.

It was a good day. You really do learn the language quicker if you’re constantly speaking it.

From Abhilasha, Merici College.

On the 21st of August the Mandarin class went on an exciting excursion to the ANU Department of Asian Pacific Studies. We got to experience how uni students learn Mandarin in contrast to how we as high school students learn. The lecture was quite lively. The students are feichang enthusiastic about learning Chinese. Wang Laoshi made the lecture engaging and she gave us qí okéli and chā (chocolate and tea). The atmosphere within both the lectures and tutorials was a pleasant change from the atmosphere we face here. Overall this excursion was a great learning experience.

From Cassie, Mary MacKillop College,

Our Mandarin class consists of four beginning students, three from MacKillop, one from Merici and three continuing students from Merici.

We started our day at Merici college, going over our notes for our upcoming test. At ten o’clock, we made our way over to the ANU for our first Mandarin lecture. We met Wang laoshi our lecturer for the hour. There were a few nervous ‘nin hao’s’ on our part. We entered the room and had to sit at the front. Wang laoshi made each of us introduce ourselves in front of the uni students. We were nervous but everyone was welcoming and didn’t laugh at our pronunciation. Once that was out of the way, or so we thought, the lesson began; the topic was bargaining. We learnt how to haggle in a Chinese shop and some of the tricks shop keepers can use.

When the class was over, we went to a restaurant and had sushi with our mixed group. Next up was a speaking tutorial. We entered the small room and had to recount the lecture to
For those of us with the languages bug, there is no explanation necessary: languages are exhilarating!

We are so fortunate at Merici to have a vibrant Languages Department with talented and dedicated speakers of our five Languages. Setting some sort of record for Languages offered in a College, the linguistic opportunities at Merici continue to flourish.

This year we have been treated to Renaissance paintings, travelled the Silk Road, taken part in a Mocktoberfest, explored Japanese culture in an authentic setting and travelled into the countryside for a French feast. We’ve spoken, cooked, played and sung in different languages. With the French and Italian exchange students we fired up an Aussie BBQ and made damper and Pavlova, and taught our guests so much along the way.

Research shows us that music and languages are two of the most stimulating activities for brain growth. Languages aren’t easy, but they can be so much fun and so rewarding. The brain development that occurs through the process of language learning can have positive effects on the brain’s ability to create new neural pathways, in short languages grows the brain!

At the time of writing, the Gillard government has just released its plan to make Australia and Australians ‘Asia-literate’. As a part of the Asian Century we are recognising our place in the predicted growth in Asia and the opportunities we have to equip ourselves to participate. The Gillard government has espoused as a part of this proposal, the importance of education with an Asian focus in the lives of our students. Merici is well-placed to develop language skills that support this purpose. The Australian Curriculum will mean that in the coming years as the curriculum is phased in, students in Year 7 will arrive at Merici with more hours or language study than ever before.

‘Language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency of this world order’ (Cosgrove 2002).

If you’d like to discuss your language study, including some innovative ways to flexibly learn your language please do not hesitate to speak with me in the Languages Staffroom or contact me at antonietta.prosperi@merici.act.edu.au.

ACER Certificates of Language Competence

This year the certificates were completed by Years 8 – 10 in all languages. The certificates demonstrate language competence and a capacity to learn language and this year we had excellent results across the year groups. Students achieved a range of results, from Participation to High Distinction. There were many students who attained Credit level, which is no small achievement. The certificates measure each level against students nationally and so it is a great indicator of how our students fare across the national average. Below are the students who achieved the High Distinction and Distinction in their language.

**High Distinction**

French Certificate 1 (Year 8): Lucy Chilver, Yoshia Pathmaperuma, Addie Reardon,

Italian Certificate 1 (Year 8): Chloe Giannasca.

Japanese Certificate 1 Listening (Year 8): Sara Flint, Grace Mikula-Quilty

German Certificate 2 Listening (Year 10): Anna Tuerk-Jobling.

French Certificate 3 Listening (Year 10): Olympia Muir-Williams

**Distinction**

French Certificate 1 Year 8: Georgia Alleyn, Elizabeth Dwyer, Georgina Hermans, Hope Marshall, Katherine Keir, Amelia Knowles, Alisha Nagle, Monica Nery, Cassandra Nguyen, Natasha Nguyen, Karen Reyes, Louise Roser, Monica Tran, Gabrielle Walker

German Certificate 1 Listening (Year 8): Alice Carstens

French Certificate 2 Listening (Year 9): Ashleigh Harrow, Meh-Ara Tasser, Miriam Wicks-Wilson

Italian Certificate 1 (Year 8): Thelma Ban, Casey Bellincanta, Claudia Bowyer, Ebony Brady, Sophia Caputo, Bianca Cardone, Hannah Coffee, Isabella Giovanazzo, Emelie Jermyn, Eleni Kapantais, Georgia Larsen, Rachel Albertson-Kill, Teresa Pelle, Helena Pisanò, Charlotte Rooks, Emily Saltmarsh, Elaine Sterret, Isabella Vocianso, Olivia Ware

French Certificate 2 Reading (Year 9): Elizabeth Drew, Ashleigh Harrow, Tahli Low, Alyssa Markman, Holly Ross, Meh-Ara Tasser

German Certificate 2 Listening (Year 8): Jennifer Lange

Italian Certificate 2 Reading (Year 9): Alexandra Thompson, Carly Wood

French Certificate 3 Listening (Year 10): Olympia Muir-Williams

Italian Certificate 3 Listening (Year 10): Sarah Melis

Italian Certificate 3 Reading (Year 10): Elizabeth Zoneff

Antonietta Prosperi

Acting Languages and Learning Support Coordinator
Year 10 Social: Glitz and Glamour
MERICI MOMENTS

2013 House Captains

NINGIL

PENOLA

BRESCIA

TULLOW

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SEIWA