It was 4.30am on Tuesday 17 April when I heard my phone ringing…… it was the lovely Miss Brooke Deane announcing her engagement to Justin Wood. He had just proposed to her after a romantic picnic at Clapham Common Park in London, back where their relationship first began in 2006. Miss Deane and her fiancé plan to wed in June 2013.

The Merici Community would like to extend their warmest congratulations to the happy couple. May God bless you both and provide you with a fun filled journey as you prepare for your future life together.

Emma Kennedy, Colleague
It is wonderful to be in a community which enables individuals to develop areas of interest and talent. It is my hope that each and every one of our students feels she has the freedom, the encouragement and the support first of all to believe that she has talents and skills and then to explore different areas, to find a passion for something and to begin to develop it.

Enriching the whole community...

When individuals flourish, the whole community is enriched and enlivened and the culture is one which engenders a sense of well-being, of harmony and of peace. Our recent whole school events such as the ANZAC Day Assembly and the Opening of the Trade Training Centre were wonderful examples of this. Staff, visitors and parents all commented on the ability the girls had in both of these important, formal occasions to “read” the nature of the event and to react not only appropriately but responsively and graciously.

In the case of the ANZAC Day Assembly, we were incredibly fortunate to have as guest speaker Mr Max Gilbert, who was a member of Gull Force and prisoner of war at Ambon during World War II. The girls immediately grasped the unique, historical nature of the event and the privileged position they were in. They were clearly inspired and stirred by his incredibly moving address and he felt their empathy and compassion.

A very different situation occurred during the Opening of the Trade Training Centre which began as an outdoor ceremony but which needed to move into the Auditorium due to rain. Again the reaction of the students to what could have been a logistical nightmare was quite inspiring. While I made conversation with the guests in the restaurant, the move took place in a very short space of time and the ceremony resumed seamlessly. The students showed good humour and great appreciation during the event, despite having endured rain and inconvenience.

You will find much more of interest in this edition of Building Futures. Enjoy!

Catherine Rey
Principal
On 11 April, Term 1, Year 9 students participated in their annual retreat day. The girls, along with staff and Angela’s Angels walked down to the conference rooms at the Ainslie Football Club to engage in a day of reflection and learning.

The core part of the day was facilitated by members of the National Evangelical Team (NET), who ran interactive seminars focusing on the topic of body image. NET is comprised of young Catholics who work nationally in Australia to send the message to youths and adolescents that they are important, loved and valuable. Members of NET shared their stories of how they witnessed the transforming power of God’s love, encouraging the girls to use Catholic values as guide towards forming positive opinions of themselves and others.

Aside from sessions with NET, the girls also spent time with the Catholic Life Team (CLT), where they discussed the importance of developing responsible and respectable personal relationships. The girls were challenged in their sessions with both NET and CLT to think about how they are influenced by others, how others are influenced by them, and the effect this interaction has on one’s self-esteem.

The Angels participated in activities with the Year 9 students as an extra source of guidance and support.

Overall, the day was extremely positive and successful, and we look forward to inviting back NET and CLT to work with other junior years on their reflection days in the months to come.

Danielle Farrell
Spiritual Captain
The Merici College annual Social Justice assembly was held on Tuesday 22 May, to remind everyone in our community that we are all powerful and able to make a difference, be it in a negative or positive way. This is why we chose to have ‘Social Justice Begins with Us’ as our theme for our assembly, to remind us all that we can make a difference. Our assembly highlighted some of the work that our students do outside and within the Merici community. It was really great to see the types of things students are part of and passionate about.

Sarah Sowry highlighted the various things Merici does through St. Vincent de Paul and the difference it makes. Ruth Faragher gave a lovely presentation on what she enjoys about the Merici community and how included she feels by students and staff alike. During the assembly we also heard from Madeline Thorne about the relationship between Merici and Karinya House which has been ongoing since 2009. The House captains made a presentation about their House charities, which was accompanied by a very creative video, changing the words of the song ‘Call Me Maybe’ to relate to each charity and the fund raising efforts of each House.

This year, to match in with our theme, we were lucky enough to have Pierre Johannessen as our guest speaker. Pierre was awarded the ACT Young Australian of the Year Award in 2010 for his work with young people across the world. Pierre is the CEO of the Big Bang Ballers, which currently operates in 11 countries. Starting out in Bangladesh in 2007 the charity and its goals have spread throughout the world. The Big Bang Ballers use basketball to fight youth poverty and social disadvantage around the world. Their goals are to overcome social division, develop future leaders and to teach children to lead healthy, constructive, hopeful lives. Pierre himself has an interesting background and works tirelessly to help bring equality and social justice to young people. His speech was extremely inspiring and proves that we can all achieve amazing things if we try, once again proving that social justice truly begins with us.

Sarah Taylor
Social Justice Captain
Earlier this term, two Year 10 History classes had the opportunity to spend an hour with Max Gilbert. So impressed were we by his stories that we asked him to tell them to the whole school at our annual Anzac Day Assembly. The accompanying comments by students are testament to the power of his oratory.

Max is a living veteran of WWII. After joining the AIF and being sent to war he was captured by the Japanese forces. He remained in a ‘prisoner of war’ camp until the war ended. The students spent this time listening to Max and, most importantly, asking him many questions. Max answered each question in turn with enthusiasm and much gusto. He was full of charm, and had an amazing wealth of knowledge. Each student and teacher listening all learnt something new and thought about aspects of Australian soldiers that they hadn’t thought of before. The Year 10 History classes are studying WWII so Max Gilbert’s talk was a wonderful addition to the learning process. Max Gilbert taught us many things about what it was like being in a prisoner, trapped by the Japanese. He told us some of his fond memories and explained qualities like such as comradeship that most of us would not ever have experienced. We are all thankful for Max Gilbert’s generosity as we probably will never have an opportunity like this again.

Isabella Zlabur
Yr10 Student
ANZAC DAY

War Veteran moves the crowd

1 in 3 people will need blood or blood products at some time in their lives, yet currently only 1 in 30 people donate. As a community rich in support and generosity the staff and students of Merici College rallied together on Monday 7 May 2012 to make blood donations for the Australian Red Cross. It was impressive to see the large number of people willing to support this exceptional charity and contribute towards saving lives. A big thank you goes to Year 12 students Prue Long and Sarah Taylor who were instrumental in organising and promoting this service. We will welcome the blood van back to the College again in Term 4.

Brooke Deane
Social Justice Facilitator
On Wednesday 2 May 2012 the Merici College school community welcomed Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Member for Fraser and Mrs Moira Najdecki, Director, Catholic Education Office who officially opened the Canberra Region Trade Training Centre, The Bridge. The opening was the College’s gala event for Catholic Schools Week, which ran from Sunday 29 April to Saturday 5 May 2012. Part of Dr Leigh’s speech to federal parliament appears on the next page.

Merici also welcomed guest speaker Mr Callum Hann to the opening. Mr Hann was the 2010 runner-up in the TV program Masterchef. Since 2010 he has become the Australian Ambassador for Jamie Oliver’s Home Cooking Skills Program. Mr Hann has launched his own cooking school in Adelaide, Sprout Cooking and tours Australian universities teaching students how to cook and eat well. In addition he has also published his first cookbook: The Starter Kitchen. Mr Hann had an early start on Wednesday morning in the commercial kitchen where he assisted senior Hospitality students to prepare celebratory food to be served at the conclusion of the opening.

Mr Costa Georgiadis, host of the ABC TV program Gardening Australia also attended the opening. Mr Georgiadis officially opened the College’s sustainable kitchen garden in 2011 and has maintained a close relationship with the staff and students. Sustainability students and teachers at Merici College were thrilled to have Mr Georgiadis spend the day with them at the College. They visited the kitchen garden and Mr Georgiadis spoke to the students about compost. He also visited the College’s recently completed state-of-the-art glasshouse where he and the students planted various vegetable seedlings into propagation trays, such as lettuce, spinach, coriander, silver beets and spring onions. After lunch with staff and students in The Bridge, Mr Georgiadis shared inspiring stories with the students and showed photographs of his “Greening the Verge” project in Bondi which will be featured on Gardening Australia on the ABC.

The Canberra Region Pathways Trade Training Centre was built as part of the Australian Government’s $2.5 billion Trade Training Centres in Schools program and will provide students with access to quality vocational training facilities in the Hospitality and Construction industries at school.

A key partner in the Canberra Region Pathways Trade Training Centre is the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). This partnership will significantly improve the learning opportunities, career prospects and training pathways for students, through guaranteed pathways to Certificate III qualifications in industries of high demand.

Merici continues to encourage students interested in pursuing a career pathway into the Hospitality industry by giving them the best possible real life experience in the hospitality field.

Merici continues to encourage students interested in pursuing a career pathway into the Hospitality industry by giving them the best possible real life experience in the hospitality field. Through funding from the Australian Government, Merici College is now equipped to provide students with access to vocational training facilities of exceptional quality. Furthermore the incorporation of the College canteen into the same facility allows the Merici team of staff and students to provide home-cooked meals made from locally sourced fresh produce every day in a professional and exceedingly pleasant environment.

Catherine Rey
Principal, Merici College
May 2012
The Australian government is establishing Trade Training Centres to help increase the proportion of students achieving Year 12 or an equivalent qualification. We know that our nation’s future prosperity will be built on having schools that provide the best learning opportunities for our students.

Here in Canberra, the first Trade Training Centre is a consortium of four schools: Merici College, St Francis Xavier College, St Clare’s College, and St Mary MacKillop College. Two of these schools – Merici College and St Francis Xavier College – are on the northside of Canberra, in my electorate of Fraser.

It was my pleasure to participate in the opening of the Trade Training Centre at St Francis Xavier College on 26 March, and at Merici College on 2 May.

The Trade Training Centre at Merici College includes a restaurant and a commercial kitchen that not only teaches students how to prepare delicious food and drinks but through learning the skills related to the hospitality industry, students will develop the skills necessary to adapt and grow with change and innovation over their career.

The opening ceremony at Merici College was particularly memorable because it started raining at exactly the beginning of the ceremony. Fortunately, Principal Catherine Rey called stumps after about 15 minutes, and we re-located into the warmth of the school hall.

The ceremony included Principal Catherine Rey; College Captain Anne Cusack; Spirituality Captain Danielle Farrell; school board chair Graeme Plenderleith; guest speaker Callum Hann, from the Jamie Oliver cooking skills program; and Monsignor John Woods.

I was greatly impressed with the work that the Merici College school community is doing as part of the Trade Training Centre - helping equip young Canberrans for a future of change.

Thinking about the two Trade Training Centre sites on the northside of Canberra, it occurred to me that although they never met, Saints Francis Xavier and Angela Merici were both alive 500 years ago. St Angela Merici was a teacher in Brescia, Italy and St Francis Xavier was a missionary from Spain who travelled to India, Japan, Borneo and the Moluccas. I would like to think that in their stories there is something we can learn about today’s Trade Training Centres.

Just like St Francis Xavier, Australian school graduates will travel the world. They will go through different careers and work in different industries, and they need to be equipped with skills for dealing with the unexpected events that will inevitably accompany them on their journeys.

Trade Training Centres provide the educational opportunities for students to learn and develop transferable life skills and capacities through their trade and vocational experience. So that they will be able to get that first job and then the job after and then the better job that follows that. The skills they learn will also help them in creating their own small business if they choose to.

During her life, St Angela Merici passionately advocated for children to have the best quality of education. She believed they need the sustenance that education provides to the soul and to the mind, so that they had the flexibility to adapt to a changing environment. An environment where the best thing we can do is equip them for the jobs of tomorrow and establish the building blocks of lifelong learning. I hope Saints Francis Xavier and Angela Merici would approve of the Trade Training Centres, and their commitment to a life of learning, change, and limitless possibility.

Dr Andrew Leigh is the Federal Member for Fraser. His website is www.andrewleigh.com. This is an edited extract of a speech delivered in Federal Parliament.
Merici College came alive for our Open Day. School tours commenced at 10.00am and the last tour concluded at 7:00pm. The school was buzzing with enthusiasm and pride. All Departments displayed student work and projects. Some of the activities included work in Textiles, Science, Art, Integrated Humanities, La Sfida, Ancient History, iC, English, Global Studies, Canteen, Hospitality, Narragunnawali, Languages, RE, Drama, Dance, Sport, Sustainability, Music and much more. Visitors were entertained by Commedia Del Arte with Year 9 Drama students performing around the school and wonderful music performances in the Foyer, Music Room and Jubilee Centre. Dance students from all year levels performed in the auditorium throughout the night, teaching and learning new dance routines and sequences. After-school sports activities were also held with volleyball training in the Gym and netball training on the multi-purpose courts.

We would like to sincerely thank the Merici parent community for supporting our Open Day. The generosity and flexibility shown in enabling your daughters to participate in after-school activities made our Open Day a resounding success. It was fantastic to see the vibrancy of the activities throughout the College and our visitors were amazed by the extraordinary capacity your daughters were able to display. Many commented on how much pride the girls showed in their school and were impressed with the expert skills and talents your daughters have. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone; staff, parents and students who cheerfully rearranged their day to make it all possible.

Trazel Scott
Assistant Principal

I like Merici because it’s really fun and friendly! I loved everything we saw, it was awesome!
- Clare

The school was well laid out with great resources. The tour guides were lovely.
- Margaret (Parent)

The facilities were amazing. I was very impressed with the gym.
- Kristen (parent)

I like Merici because all the girls are nice and the school has lots of interesting things to see!
- Solbee

I learnt that when you burn tea paper it flys!
- Emma
This year we had our Catholic primary feeder schools come to visit Merici the day before Open Day. Rather than simply looking at classrooms, we now have our Year 6 visitors involved in activities through their 2 hour visit. This year the activities were in Science, Laptops, Dance and Food Technology. The activities were run by Mrs Aboud, Mrs Dhillon, Dr White, Mrs O’Donnell, Dr Cleary, Mrs McDonnell, Mrs Kent, Mrs Wisbey, Mrs Laird, Ms Carey, Mrs Pearce, Mrs Meyers and Ms Daley. The girls rotated every 20 minutes, experiencing our fantastic facilities and taking the opportunity to ask questions of the Year 10 guides from Mrs Murik’s Maths class. It was sometimes frantic to keep to the schedule but all the visitors seemed to enjoy their time at Merici. One of the primary schools had some international teachers from Indonesia with them and they were very impressed with how blessed we are to have the modern school facilities that we sometimes take for granted.

Gerard Ryan
Assistant Principal

I like Merici because the school has lots of space and very advanced learning programs
- Jacinta

I’m excited to be coming to Merici!
- Emily (Year 6 Student)

The school is fantastic! I’m enjoying the new area of the school and the whole tour.
- Assunta (Parent)
Hello and welcome,

Another busy term here at Merici and my second semester as Coordinator.

I really must say that working within such a supportive community and having a dynamic and strong department to support me has made all the difference. I feel truly blessed to work in such a caring and forward thinking school, making my move to Australia feel almost seamless.

The students are a pleasure to work with - yesterday we had our Senior Orals Day and it was such a delight to see the girls not only work hard, but be so supportive of one another. Well done girls you are a credit to the college.

Year 10 had a trip to the theatre last week to see Bell Shakespeare perform Macbeth – It was a real thespian treat and will help them enormously with their study of the text for their exams.

All in all we are working hard, supporting one another in our learning and enjoying some fine Canberra winter sun. Here’s to another busy term.

Louise Martingale
English Coordinator

Merici College entered the ACT debating competition with a bang this year, submitting three teams into the state wide contest. The competition, organised by the ACT Debating Union, brings students from secondary schools in and around Canberra together to put their public speaking and argumentative skills to the test in a competitive, but supportive environment. Merici students did not disappoint, with participants, ranging from Years 8 to 12, proving their enthusiasm and dedication.

Being a member of a successful debating team requires a high level of organisation and a willingness to work closely with other students to create a case which will topple the opposition’s argument. The girls on the Merici teams have worked hard this semester to meet that challenge. Students in teams of four, and their Merici coaches, have met regularly to prepare, compare, critique and create responses. For the Year 9 debating team, this often meant energetic ‘Skype’ conferencing, with speech writing taking place across Canberra through the power of the webcam. For all teams these sessions would inevitably include heavy discussion and research on and about the topics that were to be debated. These were usually current social, political and environmental issues, giving the students an opportunity to expand their world of knowledge.

On the ACT stage the Merici teams showed themselves to be professional competitors, attending every round and displaying a reliability that was not always exhibited by the opposition. While Merici did not always emerge the victor, the experience of the past five weeks has been rewarding. The participating students, most of whom had never seen a formal debate before, have had the chance to face their fears of speaking publicly, or refine skills they already possessed in this area. All of the girls were put into situations in which they had to think on their feet, learning to cope well with high pressure situations in which they had to rely on their own knowledge and initiative.

Through it all, the contest was tempered with a great sense of fun and camaraderie and it is hoped that the junior students will return to the competition next year to once again represent the college admirably.

Janell Jones
Debating Facilitator

“All in all we are working hard, supporting one another in our learning and enjoying some fine Canberra winter sun. Here’s to another busy term.”
In Year 9 English we have been doing a variety of things, such as studying Romeo and Juliet, and reading Chinese Cinderella. We wrote a persuasive essay on who we thought was responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. This was interesting, as the style of writing in Shakespeare is very different to modern day writing. After studying Romeo and Juliet, we started on our theme for the semester, “East meets West”. To prepare ourselves for NAPLAN, we did a practice writing test titled, ‘Australians should learn more about Asia’. This topic linked in with our theme and helped us feel ready for the real NAPLAN. In keeping with our theme, we also read Chinese Cinderella, the story of an unwanted daughter, written by Adeline Yen Mah. This was a really touching book that made us think about our perceptions of abuse. Because of the story line, we were able to write a feature article on the subject of emotional abuse. We are currently writing multi-modal oral presentations on what it means to be Australian. English this year has been great and we have learnt a lot thanks to Ms Passchier, who is an amazing teacher.

Jenny Lange and Miriam Wicks-Wilson
Year 9 Students

This was a really touching book that made us think about our perceptions of abuse.

My name is Kat Allan and I am currently undertaking my first teaching practicum at Merici under the mentorship of Louise Martingale and Liz Allen. Having completed my undergraduate studies in English and Drama at the Australian National University, I am now completing my postgraduate Diploma of Education at the Australian Catholic University, Signadou campus.

Becoming a teacher has always been what I wished to do in life. Merici college has provided me with my first opportunity to share my passion for English and Religious Education as a teacher and I am thoroughly enjoying myself. The staff have been supportive and welcoming and the conduct of the students both in the classroom and out, reflects the dynamic and inspiring learning environment that Merici embodies. I consider it a privilege to begin my teaching career here.

Kat Allan
Pre-Service Teacher
Merici College is well known for having some of the ACT’s fastest swimmers. This was no surprise when last term on 4 April, we took a team of 21 swimmers to the AIS to compete in the ASC Swimming Championships. Many of the girls had hectic training schedules in the lead up to the day, so it came as no shock when many personal bests were achieved and a massive bundle of ribbons were to be handed out due to various placings in all events. Merici girls sped through the pool to win many heats, including several relays.

We had such great success that 12 of these girls then made it to the ACT Swimming Championships on 3/4 May. The sheer determination and sportsmanship that the girls demonstrated on the day was an inspiration to all. 5 of these girls have qualified to attend Nationals which will be in Sydney later in the year. We wish Ali Ashley, Grace Hoitink, Ebony Norris, Paula Rusanov and Amy Sokic all the best in their preparation for competing against the top swimmers in the country.

Robert Higginbotham
PE Coordinator

There is frost on the ground and fog in the air, the temperature is plummeting – must be netball season.

Merici College has over 130 girls registered and has entered 14 teams in the new North Canberra Netball competition, 5 senior and 9 intermediate, equalling the College’s highest ever participation in weekend netball. The combining of the Belconnen and Canberra Associations means that our teams are now playing at both Charnwood and Lyneham for this season.

There are Merici College teams playing from 11.30 until after 4.00pm every Saturday, but this is just the beginning of what it means to be part of the Merici Netball Club.

Every afternoon you will find our teams training, some in the gym and some on our fantastic new multi-purpose venue, complete with lighting for those later training times. This can only happen because we have parents, big sisters and older students willing to put up their hands as coaches and managers.

We also have many of our girls umpiring every week, covering not only our games but also many others, including teams from some of our feeder primary schools. These girls are organised and supported by Cherylne Fleming, our umpire coordinator, a sometimes thankless job but one that is crucial and she does it with grace and complete dedication.

Overseeing all of this is our incredible committee. Without the tireless efforts of this group none of this would be possible. A huge thanks to Elaine Hargreaves, who has convened this group for the last two seasons, and to Cherylne Fleming, Mick Cleary, Fiona McGarry, Sally Haseler and Margie Vest who are all members of this fantastic team.

Andrew Blakey
Sports Facilitator
10 YEARS WITH CATHERINE REY
Merici farewells a loved principal