Last week, over 220 students headed to Camp Laurence on the banks of Lake Moogerah to participate in the first ever St John’s Years 7-12 House Spirit Camp. The students were grouped with 14 other students from their house. They participated in activities such as canoeing, abseiling, bush skills, tower challenge, giant ladder, high ropes, mountain biking, bush walking, raft building and a student led activity.

Students were tasked to work together throughout all the activities, building their relationships and friendships within their house through strong communication and teamwork. On each of the evenings, the students were given opportunities to reflect. Wednesday night, students were guests in an outdoor theatre and watched “The Butterfly Circus” – a fictional story based on the trials and tribulations of Nick Vujicic, an Australian man born without any limbs. Thursday saw Father Jamie travel down and present mass on the banks of Lake Moogerah.

The staff and community of St John’s look forward to seeing the attributes of teamwork, cooperation, respect and friendship built throughout the week continue to grow in all aspects within their house and collectively as one school.
WOW! What a Camp! It Was Fantastic!
Dear Parents and Caregivers,

**Years 7-12 House Spirit Camp**

As I dropped in to the camp site last Thursday, there was a hive of activity. All students were engaged in numerous activities. I was met by the Camp Laurence Coordinator, Joe Alexander, who was quick to point out the following:

The students were extremely well behaved, courteous, listened well and were vocally appreciative of the instructors. He had not had such a large group and couldn't believe how punctual they were to all change overs and in particular, how well the students got on with each other. He particularly emphasised how the students in each group (Years 7-12) mixed so well. He noticed the older students helping the younger students. Often in other groups, from other schools, the year levels didn’t mix. Over the period of the day, he continued to mention how well our students behaved and how cooperative they were. In fact, he couldn’t think of one negative point. It is a testament to St John’s but also to each family and the parents, where we share the same values and have similar expectations of our children/students. Thanks and praise must go to the students but also to the teachers who accompanied them, particularly to Mr Thomas Moore, who was the chief organiser of the camp. His organisational skills ensured a safe and successful camp. Already, I have been receiving positive comments from parents on the experiences our students had.

**School Absences**

A recent study has quantified the effect of absence on progress. According to the study, the average school student in NSW misses almost three weeks of school each year. At this rate, a student would miss nearly a year out of thirteen years of schooling between Prep and Year 12. Australian students miss school more frequently than any other developed country, except Turkey and Italy. Stephen Zubrick from the University of Western Australia commented, “A 10 day period of unauthorised absence in a year is sufficient to drop a child about a band in the NAPLAN testing.” While we now have electronic assistance where students can log on and communicate while not at school, absence from the learning environment and social group has an impact. Just as missing netball or football training or music lessons will slow progress, academic progress will also be affected by absence.

**Prep to Year Six**

Each class should have received some sort of communication from your child’s class teacher via a letter or email. All these notes have been placed in the parent portal in our website for future reference. It is vitally important that lines of communication remain strong between parents and the class teacher. If there are issues that may
present themselves, our class teachers are there to help and assist. It is always important to ensure the dialogue is helpful and the students’ needs are paramount. At times this term, I have had to remind parents to ensure that what they are saying in front of children is appropriate. Our children pick up on all that is being said and it can lead to a parent being embarrassed once the child repeats back what was being said. Courtesy in language is not negotiable; what has been said can’t be unsaid.

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Lynch
Principal

If you have a student in Years 9 to 12 who is interested in going to East Timor this year, please ring Jenny Ford on 4622 9002. An information evening will be held if there is enough interest in this.

In Preparation for Lent- J McKenzie

“Every journey through life is a deeply personal and forever unpredictable one. No two of us ever do it in quite the same way, except for one thing: we are all at the mercy of change and beholden to the fragility of time.”

Yours sincerely,
Nicholas Lynch
Principal

Expression of Interest

If you have a student in Years 9 to 12 who is interested in going to East Timor this year, please ring Jenny Ford on 4622 9002. An information evening will be held if there is enough interest in this.

Years 8-10 English

This term, the focus is on new media technologies and how they impact on our lives. Our Year Tens will be creating documentaries, our near Nines writing feature articles for E magazines whilst the Year Eights will examine both tradition and new media technologies and how they raise environmental issues. It will definitely be a very creative term for all our students and one which will get them to evaluate how technology can be used to raise issues and promote debate.
A Day in Prep

Welcome to all our new students at St Johns, who are embarking on their very first year of school. The first week of school was all about learning routines and the expectations of our Agile Learning Space. We had a range of parental emotions this year, with some sending off their very first child to school and others their last. Students have already begun learning letters, numbers and how to take care of their belongings and school environment.

Prep is one of the most vital school years, setting students up with the foundation knowledge and thirst for learning, which is needed for the rest of their school journey. Miss Marsh, Miss Cochran and Mrs Angus along with our school officers, Miss Theresa, Miss Jackie and Mrs Martyn have thoroughly enjoyed the last three weeks of guiding and learning about all our new Prep Students. This week, Preps begin many firsts, meeting their Year 11 buddies, attending their first whole school assembly and having their first IT sessions.
Dean of Literature

Introduction

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.
– Frederick Douglas

Literature is a term used to describe written and spoken material. Literature introduces us to new worlds of experience. In my role as Dean of Literature, I will be working to encourage reading amongst students and the parent community and professional reading for staff. Reading for enjoyment is perhaps the most effective way to improve student learning outcomes. Evidence suggests that children who read for enjoyment every day not only perform better in reading tests than those who don’t, but also develop a broader vocabulary, higher order reasoning and critical thinking skills, display increased general knowledge, and have a better understanding of other cultures. Furthermore, studies have shown that it doesn’t really matter what children read, just that they do. Reading for enjoyment can include novels, comics and graphic novels, magazines and other nonfiction texts. If you are unsure of what is appropriate have a chat with one of your child’s teachers or the library staff. Encourage your children to find something that they are interested in and read about it.

Virtual Reality Comes to St John’s

Recently, the latest virtual reality technology has been unveiled in the US. This has come about through a partnership between Samsung and Oculus to create the first completely mobile virtual reality device. Some of our technology students (as well as some brave staff members) have had the rare opportunity to sample this device first hand. This is a first for Roma and probably a first for any school in Australia as the device is not scheduled for release here until sometime during the first half of this year.

The experience is extremely immersive and can transport the user to a variety of virtual worlds. These range from journeys through the galaxy or the human body, visiting different places around the earth or under the sea, or being in the middle of a performance by Cirque du Soleil or Coldplay. There are also a number of games to experience as well and gameplay is astounding. You have the sensation that you are actually inside the game.

When one staff member was asked why she was hanging on to a chair for dear life, the reply was, “I am afraid of heights!” Students were also very impressed; “If I had one of these, I would never take it off!” was the excited response of one student. We live in interesting times and it is staggering to imagine where technology will take us in the next decade or two. Used properly, the experiences available through these new technologies hold the promise of incredible new opportunities for education in the future.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Mariah Thom, recipient of Young Citizen of the Year for Surat.

Virtual Reality comes to St John’s.
This term in English, we will be exploring the genre of procedures. We will be looking at a number of different types of procedures such as recipes and experiments. We will also be reading ‘George’s Marvellous Medicine’ by Roald Dahl. This book looks at George creating a new medicine for his grouchy grandmother. Students will get the opportunity to create their own procedures to help cure specific ailments.

This term in Year Five, we are exploring life during the Colonisation of Australia. This tragic circumstance impacted on the lives of many people both from European and Indigenous backgrounds. People were transported to a completely alien landscape, isolated and alone and the lives of Indigenous Australians were changed forever.

So far, during Term One, we have looked at the lives of people in England during the late 1700s and why it was deemed necessary to create a penal settlement. We have looked at the reasons why people were transported to the colony of New South Wales and what their journey must have been like.

We are going to find out how tough life must have been for convicts during that time as well as the reasons free settlers chose to move so far away from their birth place. We will also look at the impact European Settlement had on Indigenous Australians.

It should be a fascinating term of History. Feel free to drop by and ask anyone from Year Five how it’s going!

Until next time, happy History!
SECONDARY MATHEMATICS

To start 2015, the Year Eight students will be reviewing number operations and learning some Mental Maths to help them solve problems without a calculator. Years Nine and Ten are studying financial Mathematics, including percentages, money and simple interest. The Year Tens will also explore compound interest, depreciation and loans.

The Year 11 Prevocational Vocational Maths class has begun with population growth, percentage increase and using Microsoft Excel, while the Year 12s are starting a task investigating acid rain. Year 11 Maths A is studying money, wages and other types of payments and Year 12 Maths A is learning to manipulate the simple interest formula to solve for different variables. The 11 Maths B students are getting reacquainted with their old friend graphing of functions while the Year 12s are learning to take derivatives of functions. Year 11 Maths C students are learning to deal with surds in equations and the Year 12s have started out with periodic functions and modelling sound waves. It will be a busy term for the secondary Maths students as they investigate a wide range of topics. Here is brain teaser to get your mind thinking about Maths:

Two Fathers and Two Sons Riddle
Two fathers and two sons sat down to eat eggs for breakfast. They ate exactly three eggs, each person had an egg. The riddle is for you to explain how.

Answer:
One of the 'fathers' is also a grandfather. Therefore the other father is both a son and a father to the grandson.
http://www.mathwarehouse.com/riddles/math-riddles.php

SWIMMING CARNIVAL REPORT

Last Monday, St John’s held its annual Swimming Carnival with the theme ‘Rumble in the Jungle’ – it was a roaring success! Not only did everyone put in a tremendous effort with tropical costumes, even the weather dressed up for the occasion, with the hot steamy temperatures making the pool a welcome relief. Congratulations to everyone who attended the carnival; the team spirit and participation levels were un-bear-ievably high, with no one left lion around. A massive thank you to the canteen helpers; their efforts on the day saved lots of rumbling bellies. The winning house, age champions and record breakers will all be announced at the next full school assembly.
The Importance of Hearing in Your Child’s Education

Please make sure that you are vigilant regarding your child’s ear health. A visit to your local GP or Audiologist will help maintain healthy ears and healthy children! It is good practice to have a Hearing Test every 12 months, to ensure that there have been no changes in hearing levels.

Four out of five children will get a middle ear infection at least once.

Children are prone to middle ear infections. Pus or fluid builds up in the ear canal behind the ear drum, which causes pain and mild deafness. Sometimes, the ear drum bursts, releasing the fluid and making the child feel better. It is important to keep a look out for the following symptoms for middle ear infections in your child:

- Earache (your child may pull or tug on their ear)
- Headache
- Fever
- Discharge from the ear
- Difficulty hearing, especially in the presence of background noise (your child may say “huh?” or “what?”)
- Difficulties in sleeping

Sound doesn’t travel well through fluid, so a child with an ear infection may have hearing difficulties. To them, normal speech will sound like a whisper, or it may seem like they are underwater. Constant middle ear infections might delay a young child’s speech development, simply because they can’t hear very well.

If your child has had a Hearing Test, or a Hearing Screener (usually from the local Hospital’s Audiological Department), can you please provide a copy of this to Learning Support at St John’s.

Anna Chandler – Advisory Visiting Teacher, Hearing Impairment
Toowoomba Catholic Education Office

Children’s Liturgy

Children’s Liturgy will be held during the 8.30am Sunday Masses on the following dates at All Saints Catholic Church, cnr of Feather and McDowall Streets in Roma. It is held on the third and fourth Sundays of the month during term times. All children are welcome; no equipment is required. Morning Tea will usually follow Mass on the Fourth Sunday of the month.

This term’s dates:
15th February
22nd February (and morning Tea)
15th March
22 March (and morning Tea)
We acknowledge the original inhabitants of this land, the Mandandanji people, and show our respect for their ancestors and traditions.

In the next issue

Primary
Year One - Reading at home
Year Three - Maths
Year Six - Science
PE - Focus Skills Term One

Secondary
Year Ten - Geography
Science - Senior Chemistry
APRE - Ash Wednesday and the Season Of Lent
OT for Kids in Roma

Who: Kids who need help with:
  Handwriting
  Handing
  Sensory processing
  Fine and gross motor skills
  Attention & behaviour
  Self care

When: Friday 10th April
Bookings essential

Where: 52 Hawthorne St, Roma

For more information on workshops & concert contact
Maranoa Regional Council on 1300 007 662.

Contact Kate Kleinau to make a booking
0400 788 459
kate@synchronyot.com.au

MECHA MECHA COSMIC COMFORT TOUR
CULTURAL CENTRE, CNR BUNGIL & QUINTIN STREETS, ROMA

MUSIC WORKSHOPS

BEGINNERS LUCK MUSIC
No musical experience needed

DATE: Tuesday, 24 February
TIME: 3:30pm – 5:30pm
PRICE: Free
AGES: 12 – 25
Bookings essential for workshops – limited numbers.

SINK YOUR TEETH INTO MUSIC
For aspiring musicians – beginner to advanced

DATE: Wednesday, 25 February
TIME: 3:30pm – 5:30pm
PRICE: $10
AGES: 12 – 25

ROCK CONCERT

DATE: Thursday, 26 February
TIME: 6:30pm
PRICE: Gold coin entry
AGES: All ages
Light refreshments available, no bookings required for concert.