



AMSSA

AUSTRALASIAN MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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12th Biennial AMSSA Conference – Auckland, 13 – 16 July 2013

With this newsletter is a pdf conference flyer with dates, times and registration costs. Please be sure to distribute the flyer to the relevant staff at your school.

Welcome to the AMSSA newsletter.

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Karen Nguyen, Justice Captain, Academy of Mary Immaculate, Fitzroy gave this reflection to the Academy at the final Year 12 Assembly 2012

“Good morning you lovely men and women of mercy!

Our time together draws to an end and so we must bid each other farewell. When I was writing this speech, I decided to take the happy approach so we can all laugh together one last time instead of sitting here in tears – in which case I wouldn’t be able to read my speech at all. So without further ado, let’s take a minute to reminisce on the wonderful things we’ve done this year: \$13,000 worth of wonderful things. That’s right... \$4000 for Project Compassion back in Term 1, \$1000 to become Australia’s very first Mercy Beyond Borders ambassador and an incredible \$8290.95 for our Mercy Fundraising – including Harry Potter day.

\$8290.95!!!

I don’t know about you but I may not ever get over that... You know how I was telling you about the whole competitive Asian thing? Well, I could not be happier. We smashed our record and it is all thanks to you!

That cake you bought is going to make a difference in the world; going to watch Napoleon Dynamite or that One Direction video at lunch is going to help people; sleeping (or not sleeping) on the P-building floors is going to help send people just like us to school.

We talk about this ambiguous Spirit of Mercy thing that fills the corridors and makes us all smiley, justicy people of Mercy a lot – but what is it? Well, I have figured it out! I have finally figured out what the Spirit of Mercy is. It is not something inside us or something that surrounds us. It’s **you**. It is every single one of us sitting in this room right now. You are all making a difference in the world – so let’s act in the Spirit of Mercy and make Catherine McAuley proud.

So, people have been using the term ‘YOLO’ (you only live once). Lately I have come up with something a little more suitable for the occasion, **YOLIM** – You Only Live In Mercy) So live in mercy for the rest of your time at the Academy. And Year 12s, let’s share our Mercy Spirit with the world as we leave this place we’ve come to call home.

Thank you so much for the memories, and thank you in particular to the girls who have been involved in the justice group this year. Could you girls please stand up ... You and Ms Luscombe have been my rock this year and you are such an inspiration. I know we’ll always be supporting each other no matter where we find ourselves in the world – and the same goes for everyone else here.

You are all amazing.

Thank you so much!”

Women of Note Concert” - Saturday, 27th October: This concert was held in the Ursula Frayne Chapel. The “Women of Note” are a group of singers from Bendigo with Mercy links. They asked to use the Chapel and informed us that the donations they received on the day would go towards Academy’s Mercy fundraising. They raised \$1690. Thus our Mercy Day Fundraising is now **\$10,000-** to support the Mercy work in Kenya and Sudan. A wonderful effort and many thanks to all involved in the Women of Note Concert.

Visible signs of Mercy at OLMC Parramatta

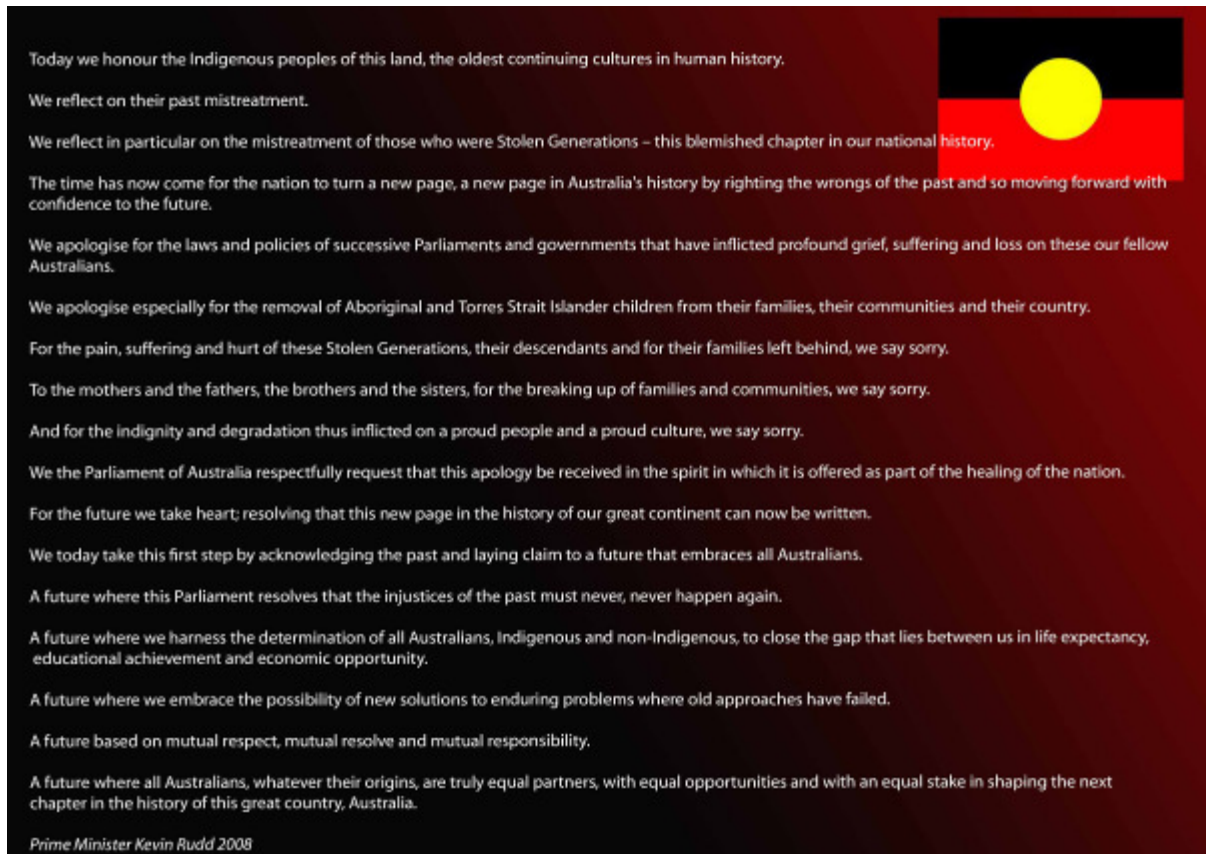
A committee of staff and students has been working to look at ways of increasing visible signs of Mercy at the College.

A major outcome was the introduction of the Rosemary Crumlin RSC Art Prize. Sister Rosemary Crumlin RSM OAM, is a member of the Parramatta Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. A woman of exceptional energy and vision, her religious vocation has led her to a succession of remarkable achievements as school teacher, artist, educationist, womens' leadership consultant and as curator of major exhibitions of religious and spiritual art. Entrants were asked to create works that reflect Mercy Values. Students were to choose a Mercy value and incorporate the related text or Catherine McAuley quote into the work which could take any form of media including photography, drawing, painting (on paper or canvas), mixed media and collage. Sister Rosemary will present the awards to senior and junior students at the last Assembly of the year.

Mercy Values posters will be hung in the Barbara McDonough Student Centre and other rooms around the College, and crucifixes will be placed in more classrooms.

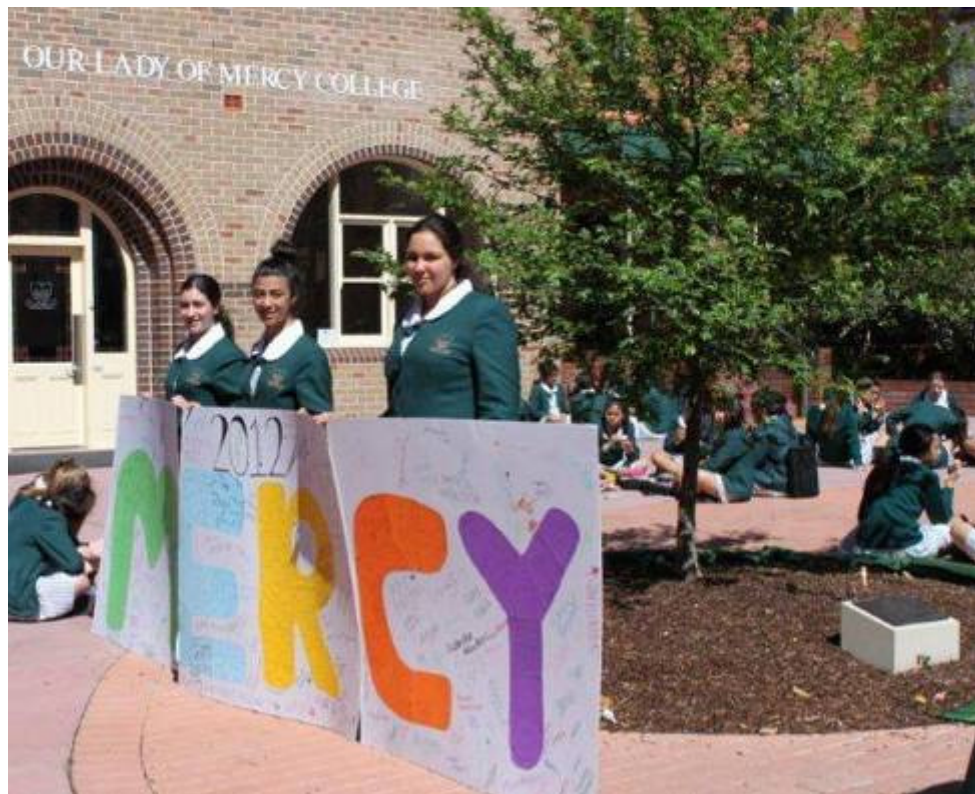


An acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the Parramatta area has been created and will be placed in College Reception along with the 2008 Stolen Generation Apology from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. A quote from Catherine McAuley, 'Our name is Mercy and our spirit is compassion' will be imprinted on the glass at College Reception and there will be a display of cards illustrating the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy near the photographs of the College's Principals.



OLMC Parramatta Mercy Tree making a difference

There is distinct burst of green colouring the courtyard near College Reception. Seven months after it was planted, the Mercy Tree is starting to take shape and give us a glimpse of what it might look like when fully grown. At full size, the Chinese Elm tree is expected to grow up to 10 metres tall and 11 metres wide.



The Tree is undeniably making an impression well beyond the tips of its branches. Over \$40 000 has been donated to the Mercy Tree to date by OLMC community members. At their Annual General Meeting in September at Reunion Day, the College's Alumnae decided to donate \$15,000. the broad community enthusiasm for the Tree and all it represents is demonstrated by the fact that the Parramatta Advertiser, the Catholic Weekly and Parramatta Diocesan all featured the Mercy Tree in 2012.

From the funds raised so far, donations have already been made to two works of the Sisters of Mercy Parramatta; Mamre House community farm and St Michael's Family Centre. Mamre House is a restored colonial homestead original owned by Samuel Marsden sitting in 86 hectares of flood plains in Orchard Hills. The project was started by Sister Mary Louise Petro in 1986 with a vision to 'be a place of promise where individuals are enabled to realise their potential and contribute to the community. In late August, the Director of Mission Claire Thomas together visited Mamre House with four Year 9 girls to present staff there with the donation cheque. The girls were given a tour of Mamre House and told about the various programs which include a community farm, social enterprises, training and programs for high school students. The girls then presented staff there a symbolic \$5000 donation which will go to purchase two new water tanks to assist with irrigation of the community farm, which is vital to most of the programs.

St Michael's Family Centre in Baulkham Hills assists homeless and at-risk women and children. \$2000 has been donated to the St Michael's Family Centre to fund a Women's & Children Camp.

In September, the 2013 Mercy Tree Appeal was launched. Sister Catherine Ryan RSM, the Congregation Leader, spoke at a staff meeting, a Parents & Friends meeting and to students at an assembly throughout October and November. She spoke about the projects that have benefitted from the Mercy Tree so far and projects the Trustees hope to support in 2013.

The trustees of the Mercy Tree Gift Fund have nominated two projects as 2013 beneficiaries:

- **Mamre mutts**, A new pet day-care program providing employment and training opportunities for people with disabilities. Donations will go toward purchasing equipment and materials for building fencing and dog kennels for the program.
- **A new Mercy Works project in regional NSW** which aims to provide support and healing to Aboriginal women who have come out of detention and will include building a gathering place to assist in their transition from custody to community in a culturally safe environment.

Now at the end of 2012, Claire Thomas, the College's Director of Mission says the Mercy Tree is well and truly embedded in the consciousness of the student community as is the sense that the tree is a living symbol of all things Mercy. The Tree featured heavily in Mercy Day preparations including the bongo drumming for refugees and asylum seeker awareness raising with origami boats around the Tree. The Tree even made a cameo appearance in the Year 11 farewell skit to this year's Year 12 group; a fully grown (almost giant) Mercy Tree was the dominating feature of the scene they set to describe OLMC 60 years from now. Prime Minister Julia Gillard even visited the Tree when she came to the College in September and the leaders have asked to be able to decorate it for Christmas.



Mercy in Action

Mercy Works supports the local and overseas relief and development activities that are part of the vision of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Mercy Works is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by supporting long term development projects in impoverished communities overseas and in Australia.

We work with some of the most challenged people in Australia and the Asia Pacific region by supporting local communities in building their own capacity to improve health and social well-being and in expanding their education and employment opportunities.



In **Timor-Leste** Mercy Works is supporting education where one in about ten children are still not going to school. Almost every second child leaves school before reaching grade four.



Sr Helen Nolan RSM (pictured above, with Timorese builders) has been working with the local Timorese people in establishing Early Childhood Learning Centres in Fohorem and Datorua.

Currently Mercy Works is assisting with the establishment and training of teachers for a new Early Childhood Learning Centre in the remote Taroman village in the sub-district of Fatululik.

Mercy Works relies on the generous support of donors and fundraising activities of schools to fund these vital projects in Timor-Leste.

For more information on the many great projects which Mercy Works supports contact our Community Education Coordinator, Monica Whelan LCM email: mwce@mercy.org.au and visit our website: www.mercyworks.org.au



God knows I would rather be cold and hungry than the poor in Kingston or elsewhere should be deprived of any consolation in our power to afford.

Catherine McAuley to Teresa White, November 1, 1838



A MORNING OFFERING

(Adapted from Morning and Evening Prayer of the Sisters of Mercy)

At the dawn of this new day we lift our voices to you, God of all nations, as we pray.

You are the God of industrialised nations and developing countries:
Teach us to praise you with one voice.

You are the God of coastlands and heartlands:
Give us knowledge of your wondrous love.

You are the God of north and south, of east and west:
Move us to shout for joy because we are your children.

You are the God of peoples with diverse customs and languages:
Help us to love one another as brothers and sisters.

God of all peoples and nations, thank you for your protection during the night. At our rising, let us praise you. In our waking, let us serve you. Wherever we go today, let our hearts be centred in you, for whom alone we go forward or stay back. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.