“In God my Faith is Constant”
(St Mary of the Cross MacKillop)

How Will You Re-Create Your World?

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends,

Silver Jubilee
St Mary MacKillop College will celebrate its Silver Jubilee on February 8th 2013 with a Mass at 12.15pm at St Mary’s Church followed by lunch in the College grounds. All are welcome.

Strategic Plan 2013-2016
In response to the School Improvement Review Report, our Leadership Team spent two days in Bendigo working on developing a Strategic Plan which is focussed on enhancing teaching and learning at the College. As already indicated, significant improvement has already been noted in the Report but we cannot be satisfied that the job is complete. Our desire is to develop aspiration in our students and to engage our teaching staff in continuing to develop teaching practices that are current and engaging for students.

Federal Government Funding
Recently we heard the good news that we have received $160,000 in Federal Government Funding for the refurbiishment and development of our Science Rooms. This will also necessitate the College obtaining a loan of $600,000. This will result in the realization of more up to date science rooms and equipment for our students. We hope to commence work sometime in 2013.

Staff Departures
I acknowledge the great work done by the following Staff Members who will be leaving at the end of 2012 or who left earlier in the year: Mandy McMahon (VET/Pathways), Melissa Sheridan (Food Technology Assistant), Kylie McGlade (Library), Kursty Knee (Japanese), Kate Brady (English), Colomba Ficarra (Art), Laurel Harrison (English), Mary Hoare (Food Technology) and Christina Leahy (Teacher Assistant). Ben Moloney taught for a term.

Staff Acknowledgement
We are blessed at the College to have a very committed and dedicated staff both in the areas of teaching and administration. I thank all our staff for the wonderful work they do in supporting and encouraging our students challenging them to reach their fullest potential.
Parents
Thank you to the many parents who support their children in their education. I have written many times that the more you encourage your children in their education the better they will perform. It is part of our strategic plan to enhance the parent involvement in the school from 2013 onwards. Know that you are always welcome to phone teachers or make an appointment to come and see them at any time.
Thanks to all associated with the College for a wonderful year.

Rob Aron
Principal

Christmas blessing

And a joyful new year.
In J.R.R. Tolkien’s wonderful trilogy, The Lord of the Rings, we are introduced to a delightful group of little creatures called hobbits. These easy living, gentle people who inhabited Middle Earth can teach us much about gift-giving at Christmas time.

Among the customs of the hobbits was to give new gifts only to new friends. Old friends were given old gifts such as family heirlooms. The older the friendship, the more ancient the gift. What happened naturally was a sort of perpetual gift exchange. Prized possessions, rare and beautiful things, simply flowed back and forth among them. This custom of giving away a gift that you yourself had once received might strike us as being impolite. But if the gift is a symbol of love, should not the love be shared passed around?

This practice of the hobbits expresses a good theology about what we, as Christians, should be doing at Christmas time. Just because a gift is old, well worn and perhaps out of style does not take away from its symbolic value; perhaps it adds to it! For the longer we have a valued possession, the more affection we will have had a chance to invest in it and the more of our loving energy it will have absorbed. Our friends the hobbits could remind us that all gifts are really symbolic. They are magic reminders that we ourselves are the real gifts that are exchanged with others. This central and sacred concept that gifts are intended to be signs is often forgotten in the blitzkrieg blizzard of business advertising. We become more concerned about the size, shape and price tag than with the meaning invested in the gift.

May the hobbit’s simple but sincere gift-giving tradition temper our usual holiday excesses and free us to give gifts that are true expressions of the heart.

I wish all members of the St Mary MacKillop College community a happy, restful and safe holiday. May the blessings of the Christ child be with you and all those you love this Christmas and may we find peace and gratitude in our world.

Mrs Catherine Howison
Director of Mission
ADVENT PRAYER

God who dwells with us,
we pray for one gift this Christmas;
we pray for a change of heart.
For any relationship with You
is more an affair of the heart than of the head.
We pray for hearts open enough so that we can,
like Mary, take the You at your word
and not demand that all of our questions
be answered at that outset.
We pray too that our hearts be as fruitful as Mary's
and eventually as passionate, on fire,
full of love for Jesus and His Good News.
In this way future Christmases
in this third millennium might just be celebrated
in a world more in keeping with what You
had in mind in the first place.

Amen.

GIFTS you can GIVE this Christmas

World Gifts Catholic Aid Agency  http://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/
St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal  http://www.vinnies.org.au/home-vic

25 YEARS OF YEAR 7 - 12 CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SWAN HILL

In 2013 St Mary MacKillop College will mark 25 years of Year 7 - 12 Catholic Education in Swan Hill. A Mass of Celebration will be held on Friday the 8th of February, 2013 at 12.15 in St Mary's Church. All members of the St Mary MacKillop College community, past and present are warmly invited to attend. More details will become available soon.

Mrs Catherine Howison
Director of Mission

PARISH CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES
Monday December 24th Children's Mass 6pm St Mary's
Monday December 24th Mass at Nyah West 8.30pm
Monday December 24th Mass at St Mary's 10.30pm
Tuesday December 25th St Mary's Mass 9am
QUICKSMART IS GETTING STRONGER
A very successful learning program adopted by St Mary MacKillop College is gaining strength in numbers due to the support of some volunteers. After humble beginnings with 8 students in 2011, this year we have been able to cater for about 20 students on the QuickSmart Numeracy Program. This is with thanks in no small way to the enormous generosity of some volunteers within our community.

QuickSmart is an intervention program that focuses on building very strong basic skills with number facts. It was designed by Professors John Pegg and Lorraine Graham at the University of New England. Aiming to develop fluency and accuracy, or automaticity, QuickSmart relies upon a ratio of two learners to one instructor. Normally this ratio would make it very difficult to cater for any more than a handful of students each year, but with the help of four volunteers we have been able to provide this program to a very significant number of students for a school of our size. Achieving success with this number of students is bound to have a very positive impact on the student body as a whole.

These wonderful volunteers have been prepared to be trained in the program early in the year and then meet with two students each, three times a week. The program goes for 30 weeks. All of them have enjoyed the program and the contact with the school. But most of all they have been rewarded by seeing the enormous difference they have been able to make through the program to the education of some young people.

QuickSmart promises to be very successful in what it sets out to achieve. There is little doubt in the impact it can have on the futures of our students who complete the program. This is why we have the program and it is the most important aspect of it. But a very close second is the fact that we now have members of our wider community involved in a very concrete and integral way in the educational lives of students at our college. We hope this will be so for many, many years to come and we thank them.

Damian Howison
Maths Coordinator

School Holidays Office Hours:
Office closes: Tuesday 18th December, 2012 at 1.00pm
Office opens: Monday 21st January, 2013

Office hours: Mon 21st – 25th January, 2013 – 9.00am – 3.00pm
            Tue 29th January, 2013 onwards – 8.15am – 4.30pm
CAREER NEWS
Year 12 Student Assistance
Careers Office staff will be available to speak with any Year 12 student from 1.00pm on Monday 17th until 1.00pm on Wednesday 19th if they require any assistance regarding change of preference and/or their pathway into further education.

STUDENTS PERFECT THEIR JAPANESE LANGUAGE
Students from Year 7 – 10 studying Japanese participated in the Language Perfect Challenge during Term Four. During the five weeks, students had access to Language Perfect in and out of the classroom where they practised their reading, listening and writing skills in an extensive range of hiragana and vocabulary relevant to their units of work. The online computer game is a self-directed learning tool for mastering one of the building blocks of communication: vocabulary. Students earn points by simply ‘perfecting their language’ as the program picks up and repeats any words students are struggling with. Currently over 100,000 students from 1000 schools around the world have used Language Perfect and the LOTE department is excited to be implementing the program into the curriculum in 2013. Congratulations to all students who participated and to our winners of the five-week challenge!

おめでとうございます!

Year 7
Gold - Braley Brown - 951 points
Silver - Breanna Kelly-Guthrie - 735 points
Bronze - Gavin Carmichael - 492 points

Year 8
Gold – Lachlan Carroll - 1500 points
Silver – Reece Toner - 989
Bronze – Zoe Pinchen - 974 points

Year 9
Gold – Thomas Leahy - 248 points
Silver – Georgie Tully-Watts - 235 points
Bronze – Neane Carter - 226 points

Year 10
Gold – Chris Barkman - 1973 points
Silver – Declan Saville - 1633 points
Bronze – Laura Carmichael - 689 points

ITALIAN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
In the last week of classes, Years 8 and 9 students have been busily working on their activities and excursions.
As a Term Four project, Year 8 students created Animal storybooks to read to Year One at St.Mary’s Primary School and the Year 9 Italian class organised a Fashion Parade which was also
a huge success with students dressing up in a variety of different themes. This year, themes chosen were, dressing up as Grandparents, Sport, Hippy, Party, School and of course a Wedding Theme. Thank you to all students who participated.

I have included photos of the Year 9 Fashion Parade and Year 8 excursion are included below.

Gabriella Salvo and Irely Cleeland

A group of Year 8 students reading their storybooks

Year 9 Italian Fashion Parade Photos

Ruby Lay as a Hippy
SPORT AND RECREATION TRAINING DAY
Year 9 students enrolled in the 2013 VET Sport And Recreation class recently undertook a Community Coach Training Program under the guidance of Regional Coordinators from the “Active After School Communities program. The CCTP initiative is a Federally funded program that is designed to prepare and assist future coaches and leaders, highlighting to prospective candidates the fundamentals of sports coaching. Sam Muscatello, Christine McGinty and Jared Keely delivered a highly effective, hands-on coaching day and the students derived plenty from the opportunity.

In 2013 St Mary MacKillop College will have the highest ever intake of students into the Sport And Recreation Certificate II course. They will be responsible for coaching years 5 and 6 students from St Mary’s, Swan Hill North and Swan Hill primary schools on a weekly basis as they prepare for their summer and winter sports carnivals. In addition the students will be qualified to deliver sessions for the Active After School Communities program.

In the AASC program the students will work in pairs to deliver a structured one hour session each week at local primary schools. These programs run for seven weeks and provide the “Sport and Recreation” students with the ideal opportunity to develop their planning and organising, leadership and team work skills; all of which are essential in the modern workplace.

Schools involved in the AASC program include Lake Boga, St Mary’s, Swan Hill North and Swan Hill primary schools, with other sessions also delivered at the Swan Hill Specialist School and also on behalf of Swan Hill District Health.

Students will be remunerated $20 per session for their efforts, and are assessed for full accreditation on a regular basis as they deliver the program. Once full accreditation is gained they can use their coaching and leadership skills in other AASC centres around Australia. It has the potential to provide an extra form of income for students who undertake tertiary studies in future years.

YEAR 7 & 8 END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES
Rounding off the year, St Mary MacKillop College held various fun activities for Year 7 & 8 students to enjoy from Monday 10th to Wednesday 12th December. The aim of the program was to provide students with an opportunity to participate in fun activities and spend time with friends, whilst remaining at school. Some of the activities included fishing, skipping, canoeing, board games, Christmas art, dodgeball, basketball, and tennis, just to name a few.
The final activity on Wednesday afternoon was at the Swan Hill outdoor pool where students were able to cool themselves off in the pool and on the water slide. Many thanks to the staff who were involved in running these activities and students who were well behaved and participated in good spirit.

Miss Chelsea Bird
Activities Coordinator