

## Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College Parents' and Friends' Association Inc

### **President's Report – AGM 8 September 2015**

During the last 12 months the P&F Executive have worked hard to fulfil our objects of building friendships and community; being a link between the community and the College; promoting education in the Mercy tradition and assisting the College with funding.

During this year of transition, we have held many functions from Welcome drinks to Christmas cocktails with Catherine; from the Father-Daughter movie night to the Mother-Daughter high tea; from the Golf Day to Melbourne Cup lunch. We have offered hospitality and thanks at the Staff Appreciation Drinks, the ACC Opening and Open Day. There have been Year Morning Teas and Cocktail Functions, as well as Class Parent Meetings, Results Forums, general meetings and executive meetings.

The highlights for me this year have been the Parent Forum with Professor Ian Hickie and the establishment of the "Friends of" groups. One at the macro level of community, the other the micro.

Professor Hickie was an expert and engaging speaker and for the first time we extended an invitation to the parents of Loreto Kirribilli, Marist College North Shore, Mercy College, and St Aloysius' College, thus bringing together a wider community on a topic which knows no boundaries - teenage mental health. There was enormous support within the Monte community and the parents from other schools were generous in expressing their appreciation for the invitation. An invitation from St Aloysius has followed and I hope it is something that continues.

The "Friends of" groups grew out of a perception that at the other end of the spectrum parents are often at Monte with their daughters for extracurricular activities and that this presented a perfect opportunity for building parent

connections informally and across years. With the help of some dedicated people we have established Friends of Performing Arts, Friends of Mercy and Friends of Debating. Some of it has been slow to get going, some will be rethought but I believe the idea still holds - that this is an opportunity not to be wasted and a fundamental means of creating a caring, connected community. I strongly believe we still need to build on our pastoral care role, look for opportunities for parents to engage in living the Monte values with their daughters and extend our role to past parents. I hope Friends of Mercy will develop to fulfil this role.

The P&F Executive also worked with Nicole Christensen and Glenn Ollerton to identify projects requiring funding to benefit girls currently at Monte and this year that funding went towards canteen equipment and the online ordering system, an interactive tutorial room project and sound attenuation in the library and Masalou building. In addition, we continued the tradition of supporting a bursary at Monte.

With Deanne O'Shea and the Development Office we have improved our online presence and communication with parents and friends by getting year lists to parents, produced a youtube invitation to the father daughter movie night featuring Andrew Rutherford, one from Ian Hickie, prepared our weekly parent page in Monte Matters and updated our webpage. We are also working with them on LinkedIn, a newsletter format for all our groups and a question to go into the school survey about P&F functions.

Another major improvement was to set up online banking - a process started by our previous treasurer and completed by Andrew Rutherford. It has made our life so much easier and I hope those of you who we reimburse feel that way as well.

Other things are left on the to do list: reviewing our current events and assessing whether they meet the changing profile of families and setting up a working party to look at the canteen menu.

When I chose to step into the position of president I did so for three reasons: I have a great love of Monte having first attended the school in Year 4 in 1974. My third and youngest sister graduated in 1995 and the next generation started a mere 10 years later. At one point we had five cousins attending Monte and we have a five year old who will graduate in 2028! So it was also a way of repaying the Mercy sisters and Monte in a very small way. And finally it was a determined effort to stay connected to my youngest daughter at a time when it felt like our family had moved on from school.

But in giving I have actually been overwhelmed by what I have received.

So to thank you:

Our work would not be possible without a wonderful engaged parent community, a supportive school executive lead by Nicole Christensen, a dynamic Development Office and the teams of set up, IT and other staff. When I look at what happens in just one week at this school I am amazed at the number and range of stuff that goes on and the organisation, thought and care it involves.

A special thank you to Nicole Christensen for your warmth, your leadership and your support. It has been a pleasure to work with you and I look forward to seeing your compassion and humanity continue to be reflected in the school.

We are also fortunate to have wonderful support and encouragement from Deanne O'Shea and the Development Office team of Pat Clarke, Ann Buchanan, Sonia Brennan and Lena Buchanan. A very big thank you.

Thank you also to Diana Choquette, Jean Shatek and Sr Jennie Ryan, Natassja Sanjay and Catherine Elliott who have worked quietly behind the scenes to set up the Friends of groups - offering hours of thought, time and hospitality.

A special thank you to Sue Boudakin who helped me keep the Parent Forum on track and then hosted it so professionally. Your enthusiasm and positivity are infectious.

Thanks also to the Year Co-ordinators, Class Parents and many volunteers. The Monte Community rely so very heavily on you for creating and sustaining it. And when I look at those who have spent the longest on the P&F Executive - they come from your ranks - your role is vital to the parent leadership.

And last but not least to the P&F Executive: I subtitled my goals as president as Share the Love - and that is what is at the heart of what I want to thank you for. Thank you each and every one of you for doing your bit - and doing it with good humour and dedication. You have made it a pleasure to be in the role of President.

To our retiring past President Anna Willis: A past Class Parent, Vice President, Co-President for two years and now stepping down as Past President. As I have said before you bring a thoughtfulness, emotional intelligence and wisdom to matters that will be hard to replace. I value your friendship and thank you for your wise counsel.

To retiring Co Social Convenor/Class Parent Co-ordinator Nicole Upfold: Nicky has also been a past Class Parent and Year Co-ordinator before joining the P&F and being in her current role for three years. You are a dynamo juggling so many balls with a laugh and a joke - why didn't it surprise me that you are the youngest child. Thank you for your energy and passion, your huge amount of work and your commitment to the Monte Community.

Nicky has been helped for the last year by Bernadette Gates who has also been a Class Parent and a General Member of the Executive. Her skills and professionalism will not be lost however as she moves with Nicky to Year 12 events.

To Therese Daly: also a three year veteran of the P&F Executive - a past Secretary who quietly and efficiently got things done - a person who makes the job look easy and looks for no reward.

My thanks also to continuing members of the P&F Executive -

Thank you to my Deputies Jenny Avvenevole and Peter McNamara for your support and wise counsel.

To Joanne Raheb Mol and Catherine Hnidec for helping keep us informed and organised.

To Andrew Rutherford and Rachel Eagleton for managing the finances and trybooking.

To Anna Stackpool for looking at the webpage, Jean Shatek for Friends of Mercy and Sonia Brennan for your unmatched organisational skills.

Thank you all for the gift of your time and commitment and energy, the Monte Community is stronger for it.

I know I leave the P&F Executive in good hands with Andrew Rutherford at the helm. My wish is that we continue to work hard to create a truly caring and inclusive community.

Thank you.

Lauren Heath

MSAMC President 2014/15

