PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

2013 – A Special 50th Anniversary Year

This will be the last Drawbridge for 2013. Can I take the opportunity to thank you for your support of the school over the year and your ongoing connection to and participation in this fine school. You are an informed community who work closely and intelligently with the school’s teachers and executive. Thank you.

In our 50th year, we had a number of celebrations and significant events including the open day, the dinner and the internment of a time capsule, all of which were wonderful representations of the spirit and enthusiasm of teachers, ex-teachers, students and ex-students. There was no doubt that we had fun in reaching this milestone, connecting with the past, thinking of the future and celebrating our achievements past and present. All of this happened in and around the usual enormous calendar of important events that reflect our culture of excellence.

We began the year with the Outstanding Achievers’ Assembly where we celebrated the HSC class of 2012. For the first time we had twenty-seven students gain an ATAR over 90 which included a 50/50 split of males and females, for the second year running. This significant achievement of high performance and a greater proportion of males in the mix, builds on the determined work we have been doing over the past five years.
Closely following this event was our annual Business Breakfast where Hospitality students prepared a sumptuous gourmet breakfast for guests, largely from the local business community. It’s always a highlight to profile our students, reach into the community and showcase the capacity of the school.

Our annual musical, this year “Back to the 80s”, Showcase, art, music and drama evenings were outstanding successes. There is such depth in the school in this area. Sharon Chun’s and Vlad Trofimov’s inclusion in Art Express was a highlight and promises to be the beginning of a resurgence in the visual arts at Castle Hill High School.

Sport as always, is prominent with a very enthusiastic coaching staff and capable students. Basketball and water polo were terrific highlights in 2013 as was golf and squash. Congratulations to all students for their performance on the court, field or pool for conducting themselves with great maturity and sportsmanship.

The girls and boys mentoring program for Year 12 students continues to grow and flourish. This is a superb program, one we are proud of, one that produces academic gains and, better, one that builds confidence, resilience and autonomy in young people.

And then there were the camps, carnivals, competitions, excursions, Relay for Life, scholarships, leadership programs, spirit weeks, charity drives, renovations ……… the activities and achievements just go on. 2013 will certainly go down as a vibrant and fulfilling year. Thank you for your contribution.

P and C Farewells.
This year we farewelled three stalwarts of the parent body, Mr Bruce Rhodes, Mr Malcolm McCahon (who turns 90 next year!) and Ms Sally Wilsdon. All three have made significant contributions to the school and have been dedicated to regularly participating in monthly meetings and raising money for the school. Bruce is to be thanked in particular for his determined and persistent work on Relay for Life, Malcolm for his forensic work in finding funding grants for the school, and Sally for her outstanding organisational and secretarial work. All three will be sorely missed for their thoughtful, considered and intelligent voices in this school.

Presentation Day
This year we trialled a new venue for our Presentation Day at UWS, Parramatta. We were satisfied that the centre was adequate, but have higher expectations. At a cost of over $11,000, (plus the money paid for hiring busses to transport students and the impost of $9 for parking for parents) and a sound system which was lacking, we don’t believe we have had value for money. A new venue will be sought, possibly for an evening. I’ll let you know next year.

As always, I have included my Presentation Day address, below.

Season’s Greetings
On behalf of the staff, can I wish you well over the holiday break. I hope you find time to enjoy your family and friends, take in the delights of Sydney and maybe some time near the water, catch up on those books you need to read and watch the films you’ve been meaning to see.
Take care.

Vicki Brewer
2013 PRESENTATION DAY

In the week when the great Nelson Mandela was laid to rest and his life’s vision revered and celebrated, it’s appropriate for us, in this public forum, to reflect on his legacy. In history’s pages few stand as equal. Mandela’s gentle ways, focus and life’s mission can only be seen as a source of inspiration. He was such a powerful and important man, providing hope. He was magnetic, flawed, venerated. He would go to gaol for twenty-seven years because he refused to give up the cause of fighting for the abolition of apartheid. But it was his dignity and forgiveness that sharply define his humanity. There was no acrimony against those who incarcerated him, no sense that he needed revenge or political pay back. He was a giant among men and women.

Unsurprisingly, he spoke to significant leaders about the big issues in the world: democracy, peace, forgiveness and leadership. Are these not the really big pictures on the global canvas? There is no doubt. But I was struck by what Nelson Mandela said was the most potent and effective force which could be used to change the world, no less. I thought that it would be leadership style or the power of humility combined with treatment of others. I thought that the great one might say that forgiveness, the highest and most challenging of mindsets for we mere mortals, would be prominent in what would be essential in changing the world as a better place. Alternatively, I thought that he would see respect or integrity, values to which he held strong throughout his most gruelling and confronting times, as most potent change agents.

But, not so.

He nominated something more specific, practical and more concrete. He didn’t go to idealism or values, or beliefs when he wanted to make global change.

“Education”, said Nelson Mandela, “is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Of all the powerful words uttered, these should stay with us.


Are we prepared to listen? Can Mandela’s legacy really be lived?

Bill Gates said that of all the philanthropic causes he has undertaken, including such important areas as cancer research, the eradication of polio and feeding the starving, that education was the hardest and most complex to change.

Gates’ view sharply reminds us that this was the year when Malala Yousafii, the Pakistani girl who at sixteen years of age received a human rights award for her advocacy of girls’ education after being shot by the Taliban for promoting education as a right for all, had her memoir banned from 40,000 schools in Pakistan. It is almost impossible to believe in the 21st century that this can happen. Malala’s legacy, though, is that we are reminded that there are many who do not have the freedoms and opportunities that we have in Australia. We see education as a right. We see education as an imperative.

But do we see education in the way Mandela did: as ‘the most powerful weapon”? Do we, in Australia, value it as a force for change? Or, because education is so hard and complex, even harder than medicine and genetic research according to Bill Gates, do we complacently take it for granted? Are our children worth it?

There are many who want to fight for education as a force for good for the future. They, like me, see education as an investment, something that forward thinkers see as essential for their society.

While Australia’s education system is “more than satisfactory”, we are not world beaters. We should be. In fact, there is alarming evidence to suggest that standards are falling. The gap, regrettably, between the haves and have nots, between the brightest and the weakest is yawning in its size. We must do better. Well, that’s the rhetoric and is so easily said.

Thankfully, there are those in Australia with vision and passion for education reform, in the way that Mandela would approve. There are some who can see a better society for us as a result. The preeminent, privileged and highly regarded David Gonski was shocked by what he saw and learned about Australian schools after being commissioned by Julia Gillard in 2011 to review our education systems. He and his review team, including the likes of Kathryn Greiner, Ken Boston, a former Director General of Education in NSW and Carmen Lawrence a former Premier of Western Australia, proposed significant increases in funding, for schools by billions of dollars, to redress the needs, to save the lost and to redeem the future. Gonski’s reform was a reform for the future. This was a reform that was about change. It was big.
Commitment to it from politicians, the source of our policies and directions was, as we know mixed and vexed. Some were passionate in their dreams for a new way and saw this investment in young people’s future as worthy and imperative. They wanted our children to be world – competitive. Others were grudging in their support of Gonski reforms, not really wanting investment in education and young people, doing a back flip because of community outrage, only agreeing to it out of political expedience. Such spinelessness – to say one thing and believe another – and such narrowness to not see the future in the way the great man, Mandela did, is unbecoming and weak.

Thank goodness we have prominent people with courage and backbone defending education and the investment in it. I would cite NSW education minister Adrian Piccoli as a man of political conviction and fortitude for standing up in favour of Gonski. Thankyou minister. I would also cite Julia Gillard as a woman of significance and forward thinking diplomacy for forging the way. There would be no Gonski without Ms Gillard’s vision for it. She will not be forgotten for this. Thank you.

And so, in this education community, the Castle Hill High School community, amongst teachers, students, parents, distinguished guests in a university hall, we come today to celebrate the rewards and benefits of education in this fine public school. We may not change the world but we can and do change options, esteem, perceptions of self, choices, pathways. We are part of the haves, a community that supports its school, respects its inclusiveness and understands the subtleties, complexities and advantages of comprehensive education. I wouldn’t have it any other way! We work hard to value our traditions, honour what matters and uphold our belief that excellence must always be at the fore.

In an era that is throwaway, let’s all join together to not dismiss the absolute importance of quality education for all, and therefore the necessary substantial funding of this quality. Let’s make it what counts, investing in it, expecting only the best and demanding that our children are worth it. We need commitment from our leaders. The Chinese know this, so do the Finns. And so does Castle Hill High School.

Can I applaud the wonderful students on show today. They represent their families and their community. Their work and achievements are so truly outstanding. Can I also thank our wonderful parent body, led by the P and C, an intelligent and motivated group who are tireless and boundless in energy. This school owes them much for their support and views.

And finally, to the staff of Castle Hill High School: a finer collective of educators I have not come across in my years in schools. They are irreplaceable. I respect them so much. Thank you.

Let’s enjoy today’s proceedings while taking time to reflect on the legacies of great people who are visionary about education.

Vicki Brewer
Careers News

This has been a great year with increasing opportunities for students to explore the working world! Students have been able to participate in valuable and relevant learning experiences – and I am looking forward to being able to offer a more diverse range of opportunities to more students next year! During this last term, we enjoyed three more ‘Industry Bites’ visits to some very different work environments; another great Microsoft visit in October with a group of students ranging from Year 8 to the (new) Year 12, the Sydney College of Skin Care at Pennant Hills and a visit to the Head Office of Woolworths at Bella Vista. These were marvellous visits and it is always refreshing to meet with greatly different and interesting, talented personnel who were so generous in sharing their career experiences and their journeying paths! The work of 2realise in making these visits available to Castle Hill High School must be acknowledged again and it is very much appreciated!

Our Year 10 students who took up the challenge of the Work Experience Program enjoyed some very fulfilling learning experiences within their work places and they are all deserving of warm congratulations on a job well done!

All 2014 Year 10 students should be thinking about their work of choice during the summer break so that they have the best chance of finding that preferred “employment” experience that will enhance their understanding and appreciation of what career areas may be of genuine interest to them. Students will be able to go out on work experience any (one) week during either Term 2 or Term 3. Especially with senior students in mind, all the local (Sydney area) Universities will be sending representatives for the ‘Careers Lunchtime Info Sessions’ next year – and the first Uni visit is from one of the school’s favourites, Macquarie University, in the middle of March. All the other universities – as well as TAFE and private colleges will be visiting the school – and although during lunchtime, please take advantage of these sessions so that you get to grow in knowledge and gain a more informed, simply better idea of what opportunities are available at the different tertiary education providers. Naturally, all students, parents and caregivers are always welcome to attend!

The Careers Newsletter is sent to all students from Year 9 onwards to their Department of Education and Communities email addresses – as well as their parents and caregivers. Throughout the summer break, I will be forwarding on anything that I think may be of interest to our new Year 12 students – and hoping that our Graduates will be happy with their HSC results so as to enable them to fulfil their career ambitions! Wishing the Castle Hill High School Community a wonderful break – and a very Happy and fulfilling New Year!

Jane Curran
Careers Adviser
Phone: 9634 4399 / 0433 083 648
Email: mary.curran2@det.nsw.edu.au
Sports Council Spotlight

Melissa Eades

Congratulations on your selection as Caernarvon House Captain for 2014.

What do you want to achieve as house captain?
I want to encourage everybody in my house to participate in sport, especially the girls. Ultimately, I would also like Caernarvon to win the house cup!

What sports do you compete in?
I play at club level for basketball, soccer, touch footy and netball, as well as playing state league, state champs and night inter-district netball.

What training/work do you do for your sport?
For basketball and touch I don't train particularly. For soccer we have training once a week and for netball I have training twice a week with a fitness session every second week. I also have a home fitness program to do most days.

Why do you enjoy competing in sport?
It is a good way to get rid of energy and tension. I also enjoy the challenge and pressure of team sports. Like most people, I also really like the feeling of winning or knowing I played really well in a game!

What sports have you represented CHHS at?
Practically every open girls sporting team, I've been in! I've done netball, soccer, basketball, softball, futsal, European handball, volleyball and many more! I've also represented the school at zone, regional and state level athletics and cross country.

What is your favourite subject and why?
I like sport and DT the most. Sport allows me to do what I love, play sport and I also really enjoy designing things in DT.

Thanks for the interview
Sports Council
## UNIFORM SHOP NEWS

Now available in all sizes

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## UNIFORM SHOP OPENING HOURS FOR 2014

**Before School Returns in 2014**

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**Week 1 Term 1 2014**

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<td>Wednesday 29 January 2014</td>
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<td>Thursday 30 January 2014</td>
<td>8.15am – 11.30am</td>
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**Weeks 2 – 11**

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### CALENDAR 2014 - TERM 1

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<td>Monday 3 February 2014</td>
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<td>• Years 7, 11, &amp; 12 return</td>
<td>Wednesday 5 February 2014</td>
<td>• Assembly Years 7-12 – House Meetings</td>
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<td>• Peer Support Leaders Return for morning</td>
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<td>Thursday 30 January 2014</td>
<td>• Years 8, 9 and 10 Return</td>
<td>Thursday 6 February 2014</td>
<td>• School Swimming Carnival</td>
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<td>• Whole School Assembly Session 2</td>
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<td>Friday 31 January 2014</td>
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<td>Friday 7 February 2014</td>
<td>Next P &amp; C Meeting</td>
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Wishing you all a very happy and safe holiday season
CASTLE HILL COMMUNITY NEWS and ADVERTISING

Disclaimer: Advertisements placed in the school’s Fortnightly Newsletter do not reflect an endorsement or otherwise by Castle Hill High School of that product or service.

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Looking for a fun and friendly netball competition?

The perfect competition for all ages!
Games played at Gooden Reserve, Baulkham Hills.
The 2014 season begins Saturday, 5th April.
NEW Mixed competition for ages 16+
Register Saturday, 15th February, 2014, at St Matthew's Unitng Church-Baulkham Hills (Cnr. Edgar & Rose St, Baulkham Hills) in the lower hall between 9am-2pm.
For further enquiries, please email stmathewsnetworkclub@hotmail.com.

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online at [www.summerreadingclub.org.au](http://www.summerreadingclub.org.au)

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### REGISTRATION FORM

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*If you’re not a member of the library ask a librarian how you can join.*

To go into the national SRC registration draw to win an iPod from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* please include:

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Thanks for registering! Check with your librarian to find out what’s happening here these holidays!