



Vmail

ISSUE 33 OCTOBER 2015



HIGH TEA



REUNION



ALICE GRIBBEN



SEMI FORMAL



HELLO DOLLY PRODUCTION



1ST XI HOCKEY

Learn to prize what is of value

Dear Past Pupils

Spring is here! It is the season of new beginnings. Fresh buds bloom and animals awaken and the earth seems to come to life again. For me the blossoms at this time give me much pleasure as I drive through the city.

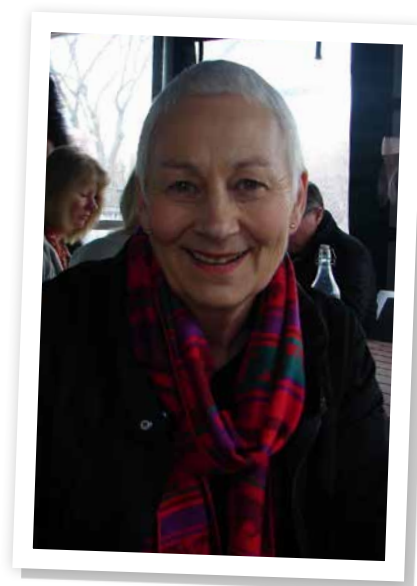
Our new event for midyear, the HIGH TEA and TOUR was a wonderful experience for the 74 past pupils who came to the Villa auditorium to enjoy a Sunday afternoon in the company of fellow past pupils. The tables were a delight to see, set with beautiful china and tea and coffee served in silver pots. We were waited on by members of the PTA under the guidance of their chairman Maarten Loeffen and were served delicious sandwiches, savouries

and sweet treats. Our guest speaker, past pupil Jenny Harper, Director of the Christchurch Art Gallery captivated those present with an account of the Gallery's earthquake damage and the project being undertaken to strengthen it. Thank you Jenny, you couldn't hear a pin drop while you were speaking!

Thank you to those who assisted in any way to make this event so enjoyable and to those past pupils who supported it. It was lovely to see so many new faces and we look forward to seeing you again. Our thanks also to the PTA and I certainly hope we can work together on events in the future.

God Bless

Debbie Frank
President



Memorial Book

The idea has been put forward to establish a Memorial Book recording the names of VMC past pupils who have died. The book would be held in the College Chapel/Prayer Room.

Between now and the Centennial we are gathering the names and date of death of past pupils. You can email the information to our Alumnae Coordinator Clare Bell - cbl@villa.school.nz

Dates to Remember 2015

Mother/Daughter/Grandmother

(Leavers' Breakfast)
22 October 7.30-8.30am
College

5th Friday

30 October
Chateau on the Park, 5pm
This will be our last ever 5th Fridays!
They've been running for 10 years so join us to farewell this event.

Committee Meeting

28 October 7pm
College meeting room

High Tea



OUR ALUMNAE



Mary Putnam (nee McCarthy) VMC 1982-1985

Mary has had a rich career history that has stretched the globe! For the past ten years she has been a producer for RadioLIVE, producing news and talk back programmes. She says it's an incredibly rewarding career and she's been fortunate enough to work with some of the best people in the industry. "I currently produce for Mark Sainsbury, Alison Mau, Sean Plunket and Willie Jackson and occasionally for Duncan Garner, when his producer is away."

Mary's original degree and career path were quite different from the media world she now works in; although media is not foreign to her after her part-time work as a radio DJ while at University. Mary completed a BA in Japanese and Psychology at the University of Waikato and is also a qualified gym instructor and dance teacher.

After completing her degree, Mary went to live in Akita, a city in the northwest of the main island of Japan, to teach English.

"My school was in a mountain village called Yashima and I travelled two hours each way by train every day," she says. "I was perhaps the first non-Japanese person to visit! Certainly I was a curiosity to everybody there. I had a fabulous time and we all learned a lot from each other. At the end of my two years the whole village had a big farewell party for me and the biggest farm in the area honored me by naming their biggest and most prized cow after me!"

From Japan Mary went to London and worked as PA to the Chairman of Sanyo who didn't speak any English at all! "My role was to accompany him to all his business meetings and events (including dinners at the flashiest places in London), and translate for him. When his friends came from Tokyo, I was their tour guide around the UK. So...while I was 'working' I was also lucky enough to see a great deal of the country. My husband was from England and our three daughters were born there."

Mary and her family returned to Auckland in time for their daughters to attend school. As her daughters have grown, she returned to full time work.

"The special character of Villa has been a significant influence in my life," says Mary. "No matter what situation I am in, whether it be at work, at home, with friends or when I am in new situations, I always try to treat people with dignity and respect - exactly as I wish to be treated myself! In fact, when it came to selecting a school for my three daughters here in Auckland, I chose your sister school - Carmel College - as it has the

same core Mercy values, community sense and educational excellence."

"My favourite subjects at school were English, Latin, French, History and RE," says Mary. "I think I enjoyed them because my teachers were so fascinating they brought the subjects alive. They spoke so passionately about places and events that I was determined to go and see them for myself."

"Always treat yourself and others with respect. Always surround yourself with good people."

Mary also shared some great words of wisdom for our current Villa girls: And be a good friend. Spend time with people who encourage you and want the best for you. Avoid petty gossip and jealousies. They spread unnecessary bad will. If you can't say anything good about someone, don't say it at all. Accept the unique differences in everybody and embrace them. Always! Life is a journey and each new experience, whether happy or sad, shapes who YOU are. Whatever life throws at you - ask yourself - what is the lesson in this for me? Study hard and learn well - a good education gives you many more opportunities later. Work / life balance is important too - outside of study - do what you LOVE doing, whether it be sport, dance, surfing or reading. Eat well and GET ENOUGH sleep! Talk to people face to face - spend REAL time, not just on-line time with your friends! Try new things - whether it be food, activities, or music. Take a chance!

Nicky McCarthy VMC 1991 - 1995

At Villa I was the school Cultural Captain in 7th form until I left for an AFS exchange in French-speaking Canada in August 1995.

After a few years I went to the University of Otago and trained to be a dietitian. I opened my private practice NutritionWorks in 2006. I now live in Lake Hawea and work around Wanaka, Queenstown and Central Otago as a dietitian, at the rural hospitals and in private practice. My husband Grant is an auto-electrician and we own an automotive workshop in Wanaka. We have two children, Caitlin 8yrs and Max 6yrs old, so life keeps us pretty busy!



Hannah Burgess VMC 2005 – 2009

My years spent at Villa and all the people I met there; from lifelong friends to the teachers, confirmed my choice to become a Preschool Teacher. I worked towards my Bachelor of Teaching and Learning and now get to see the impact I have on young children's learning, seeing them make those discoveries with my support and learning how the world works with such awe. It is such a rewarding job and I love that I can give back what I was given through my school years, influencing the learning and development of children.

Supporting and guiding them as they make discoveries about the world around them.



Christine O'Sullivan (nec Fitzsimmons) VMC 1950 – 1960

Chris began her Villa days in 1950 as a five year old boarder; her sister Anne and two cousins, Helen and Cushla were already attending boarding which made the transition a little easier. Chris remembers that there were 12 girls under the age of eight in the year she started.

Her memories of these days are vivid and she recalls a wonderful list including: the horse called Dobbin, top and tailing gooseberries, sausages for Sunday breakfast, golden sago pudding on

Saturdays and end of year boarders banquet, along with lots of friendships.

"I always remember the singing too" says Chris. "We had combined music festivals and wonderful end of year productions. Music in the parlour on Sunday nights with Mother Mercedes was a highlight, as was the singing

in the bus on our outings, or on a nice evening out on the grass entertaining the neighbours in Peer St."

When she left Villa, Chris worked on the home farm and had a short stint in Christchurch doing secretarial work before travelling overseas for several years. "I wanted to learn French when at school but my father thought commercial (shorthand, typing and book keeping) would be more useful! How well he knew that."

Along with secretarial assignments, Chris also worked as a horse groom, nanny and a house maid (in Denmark). In the late 1960's she was an agriculture exchange student and worked in Canada

and UK on farms. Between her travels she worked for Mt Cook Airlines as a travel consultant. Marrying a farmer took her back to the country and she has been able to combine this lifestyle along with interesting jobs that have come her way. Chris has been involved in sports events including the last World Cup Cricket and Soccer Cups, Para World Athletics and Para world swimming events. In early 2000 she and husband, Jerome, travelled away for 15 months on an 'adult' OE working in Ireland and UK. They have built four houses and renovated others; in fact they are in the throes of their fourth house renovation in Geraldine at present! People, plants and places are their interests.

Chris encourages Villa girls to have a 'go' at everything. Study or learn something new every year and take note of Mark Twain's quote:

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover."

CPL Alice Gribben (nee Forbes) VMC 2003 – 2007

Corporal Alice Gribben joined the Air Force straight out of school as a communications operator, however after completing some trade training she realised that she actually wanted to be a medic because it would enable her to help people (both military and civilians) within New Zealand and overseas.

Seven years later and Alice has already achieved so much. She has completed a number of medical courses covering aviation medicine and been trained in CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) medicine. These courses have enabled her to become a National Search and Rescue medic and provide medical cover and knowledge in specific situations.

In 2013, Alice was deployed to the Solomon Islands and Kiribati as a medic for an explosive ordnance team; they were tasked with destroying old WWII ordnance to make areas safer for the people that live there.

"This year," says Alice "I travelled to Belgium and France to commemorate

those that fought on the western front in WWI. This opportunity, in particular, was a humbling experience and a great honour. Being able to visit my great, great uncle's grave in Grevillers was truly amazing and words cannot really do the experience justice."

Alice is also the Captain of the RNZAF cricket team which travelled to the United Kingdom in 2010. Depending on work outputs the team is planning to travel to Australia to compete for the first time in an international defence cricket competition at the end of the year.

Alice recalls her time at Villa with fondness. In particular she remembers the Year 13 Geography trip to Kaikoura with Ms Tims and some great friends. Other memories include good times with friends, playing sport and dressing up to take part in House sports days.



"My time at Villa highlighted and ingrained values within me; respect, compassion for others, honesty and integrity are a few of these values. I strive to portray these in all aspects of life whether it is in the work place, at home or even on the sports field."

Colleen Eason VMC 1985 – 1990

Colleen has realised a long-term dream by following her passion for art and design. Nowadays, she juggles her own art with motherhood, community involvement, work and more study!

Upon leaving Villa, Colleen undertook a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Canterbury but decided to travel instead; she did however return to study completing a Bachelor of Design in Visual Art in 2005.

"I travelled for a number of years; Europe, UK, Middle East, Asia and then settled in Perth," says Colleen. "I worked for a Company called Alintagas as a Team Leader in the Contact Centre with 20

employees as part of my team. When I returned to Christchurch I worked for TelstraClear as an Operations Manager. A complete change then occurred when I realized my dream and began studying Art and Design. I worked part-time for Coca Arts, and began to create my own works. After graduating I opened a small Art Gallery in Lyttelton, joined the Harbour Arts Council, and the Christchurch Arts Council."

"A couple of kids later and an earthquake or two, and I'm on the wild West Coast, I'm the Chairperson of the West Coast Society of Arts and working part-time, studying to obtain my Adult Teaching Certificate and trying to make art when I have time. You can see my work on <http://colleeneason.blogspot.co.nz> "

Colleen believes the most important gift from her Villa education was that of friendship. Her group of Villa friends still keep in touch and catch up once a year for an annual girls' weekend away. "I treasure those friendships," she says.

To the current Villa girls, Colleen says to remember: "No one has the right to make you feel any less than who you are. Be the very best you can be."

Gabrielle Chrisitenhusz VMC 1997 – 2001

Gabrielle undertook an honours science degree at Canterbury University in Biochemistry (with minors in Maths and Genetics, and some English literature thrown in for good measure!). In September 2007 she started studying Theology at the Catholic University of Leuven in Belgium.

"I ended up in Leuven because I wanted to study Catholic theology at a high academic level in Europe, the continent where our faith first took form," says Gabrielle. "Three years later I had an advanced master's degree in Theology and Religious Studies recognised by the state and a bachelor's degree recognised by canon law." Gabrielle then completed her PhD in 2014 on the ethical issues of the return of results from new genetic tests, with a particular focus on children with genetic conditions and their families.

Faith has always been a driving force in Gabrielle's life. She started studying biochemistry because of her conviction that people of faith should be involved in all areas of science. "When I was 20," says Gabrielle, "I thought this thirst for God could best be answered as a Carmelite Sister. This turned out not to be my vocation (though I remain grateful

for the lasting friendships with Carmelites from that time), and I left for Belgium feeling called to serve God and the Church there, though unsure exactly how. I was part of a lay community in Leuven for four years, in which liturgical prayer and communal life were central. But once again, this turned out not to be my ultimate "home." I left the community for love with my partner and me contemplating marriage."

Villa Days

Gabrielle says she has some distinct memories of Villa and its impact on her life. When she arrived at Villa after two years in Papua New Guinea, she underwent reverse culture shock for the first six months. Part of what helped her cope was the incredible amount of money the Villa community raised for the villages in PNG that were struck by a tsunami in 1997.

"I remember the sports days and the singing competitions - I still remember the Claver House chants, and it was years before I could put on the colour purple without a feeling of pride! The Mercy days in which we welcomed students with a disability to Villa have had a lasting impression on me. I think



they've helped in my later ethics and genetics work, in that I first experienced (being with) people with disabilities, before "theorising" about them."

Remember....

Gabrielle believes the content that you learn at Villa is not as important as learning how to learn and learning how to study. "Don't stress so much about the subjects you choose," says Gabrielle. "Once you get to university, even if you haven't studied something at secondary school, you'll usually be allowed to study it if you have the right attitude, and sometimes you might need to work harder than others for the first year."



Nicola Eccleton (nee Ryan) VMC 1995

When I left Villa I studied Art History (I blame Jenny Stone), then Teaching and later Political Science. There is nothing linear about my career history - I have been in hospitality management and events, a primary school teacher, and now I am implementing an exciting new microfinance initiative, supporting people affected by domestic violence with no interest loans to get back on their feet. My work is funded by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, so it is really nice to be linked to the philanthropic work of the church. I am also completing my political science Masters' thesis on policy

formation. While the long term goal is policy analysis, at the moment I am really enjoying the stimulation provided in the NGO sector; I had underestimated the capability and professionalism that exists in that sector.

My Catholic education has shaped me enormously, my sense of social justice and my desire to work in jobs that allow me to have an impact in the social justice space. My boys are at a Catholic school and that focus on empathy and justice was a critical part of that decision.

To current Villa girls I would say: trust yourself and your integrity and your brain.

OUR ALUMNAE

Julia Charity (nee Connelly) VMC 1981 to 1992

Julia started a career in Science, moved to Management and is now an Entrepreneur, mother and writer. In 2015, she was nominated for NZ Innovator of the Year and won the People's Choice for best entrepreneurial idea at the Rotorua X Start-Up Pitch night in 2014. She founded and manages 'Look After Me' (an on-line market place for accommodation) and writes for NZ Business, Management Magazine and has her own column in the Chinese Herald.

After leaving Villa Julia obtained a Bachelor of Science (Hons) at University of Canterbury and followed that with a PhD, specialising in Plant Biotechnology at the Australian National University in Canberra. "I love learning," she says. "Later I obtained a Certificate in Business studies, a certificate in Creative Writing and a Diploma in Te Ara Reo Maori language!"

"After graduating, I moved back to New Zealand and settled in Rotorua to take a job as a postdoctoral scientist at Forest Research (now Scion). I worked in the

controversial area of Genetic Engineering (including research to understand risk). I had 5 years in Science Management and 3 years as a Projects Co-ordinator. In 2011, I left science to launch a tourism business (I know...who does that?). 'Look After Me' is an on-line accommodation market place where homeowners rent out un-used space for short-term stays."

Julia's Villa days have played an influential role in her life. "The quality of the teaching was brilliant - Mr Just, Miss Hill, Mrs Hall were amazing English teachers. Writing is still a huge part of my life (both in science and business), I am a performance poet and my first book will come out next year. Mrs Hawke, Mrs Bean and Mr Ingram inspired curiosity for science which ultimately shaped my career path. Villa is a very values-based school which lived through its motto: 'Prize What is of Value'. So I have grown up cherishing and looking after everything that is important to me - especially my family and my work.

To current Villa girls, Julia says to embrace opportunities. "Throw your heart in the air and run like mad to catch



up. If things don't go to plan, as they invariably do, those set-backs will form the next rung of the ladder in your journey for life. How you approach school may shape how you will prepare yourself for life."



Sinead Rennell VMC 2006 - 2011

Since graduating VMC in 2011 I've been studying Law and Commerce at UC. For the most part I love it, but definitely feel the stress when all of the assignments roll in all at once! Outside of my studies, I've spent most of my spare time working as a swim tutor. Through that I've also helped set up Vikings Swim Club. I coach an awesome group of kids including a few Villa girls (most of whom aren't in McAuley, much to my disappointment). With one more year left at Uni and an accounting internship coming up over summer I'm looking forward to taking on the "real world" and making the most of all it has to offer.



Join us on Facebook

Have you joined our Alumnae Facebook Page?
Keep up-to-date with events, news and connect with other Villa Alumnae

<https://www.facebook.com/villamariaschool>

OUR ALUMNAE



Stacy Boyle - Curnow VMC 1974 – 1980 as a student VMC 1990 – 1997 as a teacher

I attended Villa Maria college for 14 years, as a student and then again as a teacher. In between these times I went to UC to study History, English, and French and from there to the College of Education.

My first job was at St Patrick's College Silverstream, a brief stint at Ashburton College, and then to Bordeaux, France where I taught English and was totally

immersed in the southern French culture. But Christchurch and Villa Maria called me home to teach here for 7 years before I began my own family.

Teaching is still my passion and I am currently at Burnside High, teaching French. I have 4 gorgeous children and a lovely husband who also has ties to Villa through the Board. My mother taught here, my daughter is a student here, my father was on the first Board of Governors at Villa, so we really feel part of the Villa Family.

Staff Reflections

For this edition of Vmail we thought we'd ask two long standing staff members to reflect on their time teaching at Villa Maria College. Many of you will remember classes with Mandy Holdstock and Ray Taffs.

Mandy Holdstock

I started teaching at Villa in 1986 teaching Science, Social Studies and Geography, and later re-trained as a PE teacher.

My greatest memory about Villa Maria is seeing ex Villa girls when they have left school and having them come up to you like you are a long lost friend...and then having the biggest chat about what they have done since you last saw them. Some discussions can go on for quite some time as so much time has passed. I often tell my classes that those girls who hate doing physical activity right now will be the ones I see at tramping huts or out on the hills running or biking as they train up for their next 'big event'. They never believe me...but I'll see them in about ten or fifteen years time...

For me, teaching at Villa is all about the people! The girls and the staff. The Mercy spirit is evident in all who are part of the Villa community. Some girls might need a bit of 'gentle prodding' when they first arrive into understanding what the Villa way is all about, but I have yet to see a girl leave school at the end of Year 13 who doesn't just ooze Mercy spirit.

Ray Taffs

I started teaching at Villa in 1990. My subject range has included Physical Education, Social Studies and sometimes bit of Geography for fun. PE was a real challenge in the winter before the Gym was built. The Hall was freezing and was overloaded by different interests. With the new gym, I miss the opportunity to send the girls around the bell tower!!!

Some of my greatest memories include:

- The great students
- School fairs
- House chants on Athletics Days, the noise and the colours.

- The excitement on the faces of the new Year 7 and 9 students on their first day at Villa, in their spotless, too big for them uniforms.
- Selling roses to buy goats for Save the Children in Rwanda
- The staff who are incredibly supportive especially when people are sick or when the earthquakes occurred.
- Being able to bring my daughter Olivia to school for 7 years. We had so much fun on the car trips.

I love teaching at Villa as I love the ethos of the place. I love the Sisters of Mercy, the super staff and the superb students especially B4 girls. I know this is a 'PC' answer but it is true for me.



OUR ALUMNAE

Where are you now?

Over the years we have lost touch with a number of Villa students. Here's a few names we'd love to catch up with. If you know these girls, could you encourage them to get in touch with us or send their contact details to our Alumnae Coordinator, Clare Bell: cbl@villa.school.nz

Thanks in advance

Clare

Renee Ryder

Nicola Ryder

Wendy Ryder

Dania Sandford

Megan Sandford

Dania Sanford

Jacqueline Sare

Nicola Saville

Ria Schroder

Stefanie Schurbrock

Monica Selby

Carrie & Laura Sherlock

Mutukisna Shiara

Rochelle Sincock

Aimee Skilling

Megan Skilling

Bernice Smith

Francelle Smith

Louise Smith

Susannah Smith

Lucy Snedden

Kelly South

Sharon Stannard

Robyn Stark

Rose Steeman

Taren Stevens

Robyn Stewart

Hannah Stewart

Moira Stewart

Prudence Stone

Abbie Stratford

Julia Sugden

Anne -Marie Sullivan

Bernadette Sullivan

Heather Sullivan

Anna Sutherland

Maria Sutherland

Kelly Sweetman

Tiffany Sweetman

Portia Tamala

Alexandra Taylor

Karen Taylor

Rebeka Taylor

Courtney Terewi

Kirsten Thompson

Rosanna Tootoo

Anne-Marie Tully

Katherine Tully

Dawn Turner

Anya van der Kley

Helena Van Zoggle

Lydia Verhoeven

Anita Walders



SHAPE OUR CHANGING WORLD

Discover how at cpit.ac.nz

Join the 21% of Villa Maria College's 2014 graduates studying a degree, diploma or certificate at CPIT.

30 year reunion

On 7th August some members of the 3rd form class of 1981 met up to celebrate 30 years since leaving school. We met at the home of Caroline Morrison and enjoyed a finger food dinner and drinks. Some of us had kept in touch over the years, but many had not seen each other for 30 years!

The decibel level in the room was pretty high as old friendships were rekindled, and lots of news caught up on.

There were 30 of us at the gathering, most from Christchurch, but some had travelled from the North Island, and one from Southland, and Sally Hundleby who is now residing in the Middle East managing to get here while on a visit home.

Many others had been in contact over the preceding weeks who would have loved to be there but had other engagements to attend.

Initial contact was made with each other through a Facebook Group page, then email addresses collated to communicate with as many as possible. The Facebook group really just grew by word-of-mouth so if there are any others from this class who didn't hear about it, look up the page "Villa Maria Graduates '84/'85. Class of '81"

and join the group - I'm sure we'll be meeting again in the future.

We had such a good time reminiscing and catching up that we're keen to do it again soon!



From the Archives

Can you help us identify past Villa girls in these photos?

If you know the names and the approximate date of these photos we'd love to hear from you.

Our archive manager, Sister Maureen, can be contacted by email - mge@villa.school.nz or by phoning the school office - (03) 348 4165



There are ways that the wider community of Villa Maria College may like to help build the College archives. Perhaps you have memorabilia in the form of old uniforms, badges, magazines, or formal photos (with names if possible) that you would be prepared to donate to the College. We can scan photos and return them if you'd prefer.

BRINGING TOGETHER THE VILLA COMMUNITY

Be part of celebrating 100 years
16,17,18 February 2018



Villa Maria College
LEARN TO PRIZE WHAT IS OF VALUE

Centennial Update

February 16, 17, 18, 2018

We are excited to bring you a quick update of the work that has already started to bring our communities together for our big birthday in 2018.

Meet Your committee

We have formed a Centennial Committee with representatives from our College stakeholder groups. Board of Trustees (Victoria Sergel), Board of Proprietors (Peter Curnow), Past Pupil Association (Rebecca Milburn, Kathleen Gallagher), Parent Teacher Association (Maarten Loeffen), Foundation and staff (Deborah Brosnahan, Judi Wilson, Clare Bell).

Calling Past Pupils

Our Facebook continues to be a great means of communicating with our past pupils. We have attracted 2506 Likes on Facebook with some of our posts receiving 3000 views.

History Book

Our historian and writer is making great progress with the first two chapters complete! It provides a detailed and

fascinating account of Villa's 100 year journey and it is sure to be in demand at the Centenary.

Business Forum 2016

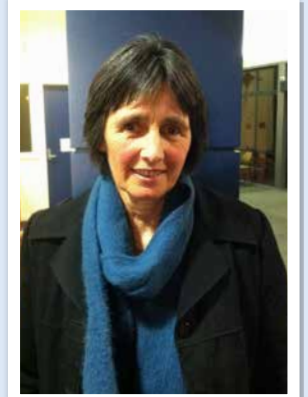
We are in the process of planning a past pupils' get together with a business focus in March. It will be an after work drinks and nibbles event with the Chief Economist of ASB, and a high profile past pupil coming to speak.



Victoria Sergel



Peter Curnow



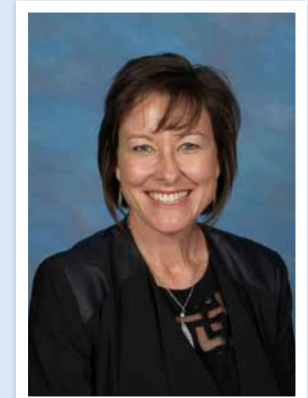
Kathleen Gallagher



Maarten Loeffen



Deborah Brosnahan



Judi Wilson



Deborah Brosnahan

Ngā mihi atawhai,

At Villa Maria College we are always reviewing how well we are living our Mercy charism.

Recent conferences of Catholic and Mercy educators have given staff an opportunity for enriching our understanding of how we can live our special character as a Mercy and therefore a Catholic school in the 21st century.

A real hallmark of the Sisters of Mercy is their openness to the changing reality of education today. When Sr Mary Reynolds, the executive director of Mercy International Association spoke of how schools ensure we are authentically Mercy, she certainly looked back to Catherine McAuley and her philosophy of education and the practical responses she

made to the circumstances of her time, but she also brought that vision forward into what issues we face today and how we can learn to emulate Catherine within our own context.

In fact whenever you spend time considering Catherine McAuley's action and response to her time and context, it is remarkable how modern and relevant it remains. We are richly blessed in her writings and in her example of what the Mercy-full school can look like.

Our staff are engaged in professional development to ensure our pedagogy remains responsive and meets the needs of today's students and we always do this with a Mercy and Catholic lens.

Deborah Brosnahan
Principal

From The Board

The Board of Trustees have been working steadily at supporting governance at the College in 2015.

Following the Special Character review earlier this year we have reviewed the findings and alongside the Senior Leadership Team, are putting in place a process to ensure we are able to meet all our obligations following this review. The Board remains strongly committed, in collaboration with our students, staff, whanau, the Sisters of Mercy and our wider community, to ensuring the College is providing education where our special Catholic character is central to all that we are and do.

Another recent issue at the Board is the government's policy called Investing in Educational Success (IES), which focuses on investment in executive principals and lead teachers for development and leadership as well as supporting collaboration between schools through cooperative clusters.

This is still very much in its formative stage and for many schools are uncertain on the extent they will support when staff are already severely stretched for time. On the issue of school clusters, we are still discussing the comparative advantages of a geographical cluster or a special character (Catholic) cluster. Villa Maria sees good reason to support both but this may not be entirely possible under the current IES policy.

The Board is also supporting capital development plans for the College, through our Proprietor, which are ambitious and exciting.

Hector Matthews
BOT Chair



Hector Matthews

**“Love one another as I have loved you,” should be engraved on our souls, and shown in our whole conduct. Be ever ready to praise, to encourage, to stimulate, but slow to censure, to condemn.”
(Catherine McAuley)**

Young Enterprise Success

This year the College has introduced Business Studies into Year 13. In this course students start up and run their own businesses, whilst also competing in the nationwide Young Enterprise Scheme. In Canterbury there are 11 schools participating in the Young Enterprise Scheme, with a total of 45 companies. Villa Maria has eight companies up and running.

The regional final for the "Dragon's Den" section of the competition was held at CPIT where companies had to present a five minute pitch to the "Dragons".

Villa Maria enjoyed great success, with four of its teams making it into these regional finals, and three of those teams continuing on to win awards.

The standout team in Canterbury was Revive 15 who took out the Regional Prize for the Business Presentation and were rewarded with a trophy and cash prize. Revive 15 sells caramel fudge whilst helping fundraise for St John and giving vital CPR information to customers.



Revive 15 Team

Back Row L to R:

Amy McDermott, Emma Murdoch,
Kahutaiki Torepe-Ormsby

Front Row L to R:

An Ta, Seepa Seanoa, Angelica Dela Cruz

Semi-Formal 2015

The Year 12 Semi-Formal was held on the 17th of July 2015, which was the last Friday of the mid-year school holidays. It was held in the Showgate Room at Riccarton Racecourse and the overall theme was "Festival of lights". Mrs Rasmussen, Mrs Sherry, Mrs VK and a small group of girls that made up the semi-formal committee put in lots of time and hard work to make this amazing event happen. After trips to 'Setting the

Scene', the Showgate room and countless stores, an amazingly decorated venue was put together.

The room was completely decorated with fairy lights, fake candles, ivy and torched willow which was all set up by the committee that Friday morning. It was a great venue for the formal to be held at as it had a large dancefloor, lots of tables and a big backdrop set up to get professional photos taken. All the

girls that attended looked amazing and had a fantastic time. Everyone was very surprised to see each other in something other than uniform and it was awesome to see all the incredible dresses!

It was a great night filled with music, dancing, laughter and great food! A big thank you to the teachers and the girls who put so much time and effort into making this great night happen and thanks to everyone that attended!



Hello Dolly

The Villa Maria College/St Thomas of Canterbury College musical this year was 'Hello, Dolly!' A story centered around the match-maker Dolly Levi and her scheme to make Horace Vandergelder (one of the wealthiest men in Yonkers) marry her. The show is set in 1890's Yonkers, New York.

With the wonderful talents from **Kate Hanning, Lachlan Gaudin, Sophie Holt, Paddy Hansen, Jane Oorscot, Joe Ryan, Laura Burtenshaw** and **Christopher Oorscot** as the main cast, plus the fantastic chorus, it was a show like no other. We also had a stellar band and conductor, featuring some of Christchurch's

best musicians and we had a brilliant choreographer, Kerry. Mrs Gordon organised yet another fantastic show, and all the students involved know it was an experience they will never forget.

Laura Burtenshaw
Cultural Captain



Past Productions.....

Here's a blast from the past with some old Villa production photos.



Alice in Blunderland 1986



3 Musketeers 2002



3 Musketeers 2002



Wild Wild Women 1997

New Zealand Representatives



Melissa Dunn (Year 7) has been selected in the New Zealand Karate Team. She will travel to India in September to compete in the Commonwealth Karate Championships.



Charlotte Worley (Year 9) named in the New Zealand Gymnastics' Team for the World Age Trampoline Championships which are being held in Denmark this December.



Catherine Hooker and Rosie Yeatman Rosie (Year 9) and Catherine (Year 12) both selected in the New Zealand Rhythmic Gymnastics' Team and travelled to Melbourne in May to compete at the Australian Gymnastics Championships.



Madaline Davidson (Year 12) is representing New Zealand twice this year. In May she travelled to Melbourne with the New Zealand Trampoline team and competed at the Australian Nationals. In December she will travel to Denmark to compete in the 24th Trampoline Gymnastics' World Age Group Competition 2015.

1st XI Hockey

Our 1st XI Hockey Team have had a great 2015 season. They started the year competing in the ANZAC Festival in Auckland, with all wins and draws. Their next competition was in the Canterbury Hockey Secondary Premier League, playing against the top Canterbury schools. They played fantastic hockey throughout



the season, culminating in a historic win over St Margaret's in the grand final. The support was amazing from peers, parents, friends and staff. Their last event for the year was competing in Federation Cup (the top National tournament). They won against Bethlehem College, Gisborne Girls High, Tauranga Girls College and Whangarei Girls High School which put them in the quarter final against Waikato Diocesan School. A nil all score at the end of normal time meant both teams had to drop their goalie and play extra time with 9 players. A goal to Villa in the first 30 secs put us through to the semi-finals against Rangiri Ruru. Unfortunately the winning streak came to an end, but being the 4th best Hockey team in New Zealand is a fantastic achievement!



New Zealand Secondary Schools' Aerobics and Trampoline Championships

In August, a group of our talented students travelled to Auckland to compete at the NZSS Aerobics Champs. A huge thank you to Mrs Jackson for all her coaching and support of this team.

Congratulations for the following top placings:

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS - Julia Burrell and Nicole Connolly 1st in Step 6 (15 & over) Pairs

Samantha Doig and Samantha Taylor 2nd in Step 6 (15 & over) Pairs

These 4 girls (Julia, Nicole, Sam and Sam) 2nd in Step 6 Teams (15 & over)

Results from Individual events:

Nicole Connolly - 3rd Step 6 (15 + over)

Two Outstanding Achievements:

Olivia McGovern (Year 13) has been selected in two Senior Canterbury teams this year. She has played for both the Magicians (cricket) and the Women's Rugby NPC team. This is an incredible achievement at any age, let alone as an 18 year old.

Jessie Anderson (Year 12) had a great Cross Country season and came away as the Canterbury Champion in both the Canterbury Secondary Schools' Cross Country and Road Race.



Mercy in Action

We are so inspired by the many ways our girls live out their Mercy values. Here's just a few of the things they have been up to recently.

Caritas Week

We recently held Caritas week at Villa to raise funds for the people of the Philippines who are still recovering from a series of devastating natural disasters.

Caritas is a Catholic organization promoting peace, development and justice in New Zealand and around the world.

One of the initiatives was Rice Day where rice is offered in place of a usual lunch meal. For many children around the world rice is often the only meal they can afford to eat, and it is fantastic to see so many of the girls giving up their own lunch and donating to such a worthy cause. Well done girls!

Blanket for the Homeless

Year 7 and 8 students, and their families, have been busy knitting peggy squares to make a nice warm blanket for a homeless person. The response has been overwhelming and they now have enough knitting for four blankets!

The Intermediate department encourage girls to show Mercy as part of their programme. Each year the girls investigate different needs they see around them and come up with initiatives to help.



Rebecca O'Connor (Yr 8) and Amber Poppewell (Yr 7)



Fiona McKay and Claudia McNulty

Riccarton Primary Breakfast Club

In true Mercy spirit, two of our Year 11 girls, Claudia McNulty and Fiona McKay have been helping to provide breakfast for young students. We asked Claudia to share some of her experience with us.

Breakfast Club is a before school programme at Riccarton Primary that serves free breakfast to the children at the Decile 2 school. It was first organised by a local youth worker Lyndon Rogers after he spoke to us as part of a Social Studies topic on poverty that we had studied. We work with Emma, the full time volunteer and youth worker there, and a few fellow Villa girls. The girls go in of a morning at 7.30 and set up tables, utensils and prepare food. At the end of the breakfast, which runs for roughly an hour, everything is packed up.

The experience of working at Breakfast Club has taught me so much about how you can grow as a person just by being aware of the people around you and the opportunities you can take to help out. I learnt that purely making connections and building relationships with people can make a difference. Talking and getting to know someone living below the poverty line can sometimes have the same effect as giving them clothes or food. Overall though, I've come to recognise that it only takes initiative to make a difference.

We could use all of the help we can get! Right now we're working on a few new initiatives, and the more volunteers we have means we can have more impact on the communities and families around us. You can get involved simply by contacting Mrs Watson or the girls involved and myself. It really is a rewarding experience that I love being a part of.

Claudia McNulty