



Vmail

ISSUE 29 OCTOBER 2013



THE BIG SING 2013 • HOCKEY NATIONALS • BRAIN BEE CHALLENGE

Learn to prize what is of value

CONTENTS

From the Principal	2	Top Poet	7
PTA News	3	Sports News	8
New to the Board of Trustees	3	Stationery Stash	9
Foundation Launches Ahead	4	Spelling Bee	10
Justice and Peace Award	4	Archives	11
Young Speechmaker of the Year	5	Celebrating Year of Faith	11
Speech Marks	5	Past Pupils' News	12
The Big Sing	6	Mercy Day celebration Kaikoura	12
New Choir Director	6	Past Pupil Profiles	13
Brainy Challenge	7	Past Pupils' Association	16

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

As I near the end of my first year as Principal of Villa Maria College it is daunting to reflect on all the events and highlights there have been.

A student interviewing me for the College magazine recently asked me to nominate a highlight of the year, which proved extremely difficult as there is always so much going on and so many occasions to be proud of the girls.

I did comment on the experience of joining Con Brio at the Big Sing in Dunedin. It was the first such event I had seen and I was extremely impressed by the warm spirit of community between all the choirs and the great opportunity it offered the city of Dunedin to be filled with fine young people spontaneously singing their way around. It was a shame that it had to be a competitive event as every choir was wonderful in different ways, but I suppose without the element of competition, the standard might not be as incredibly high as it is.

Sports tournament week gives similar opportunities for the cities and towns that host these events to see the dedication of these high achieving eager young sportspeople. Young people can be viewed so negatively in society; it is

great to see the largely unreported reality of these wonderful students who present such a positive face to the world.

Enabling the participation and involvement of our wider Villa family into events at the College is always a challenge, but our PTA did a fantastic job running a Father/Daughter breakfast for Father's Day this year, which had over 250 attend for a delicious breakfast. They were invited to share some special affirmations between fathers and daughters, building some special memories for families in the future.

Meanwhile, in the everyday business of teaching and learning, our students' results are very impressive. I am pleased with the culture of excellence that rewards students who work hard to achieve the best results possible - be that an excellence or an achieved for that individual. The Ministry of Education have published schools results on a website Education Counts, and our data is extremely pleasing across the board. We are continuously seeking ways to improve, but can be very proud of our current position.

As a community of faith, we have been delighted to hear from a number of parishes of our students being confirmed in their Catholic faith. I take this opportunity

I am pleased with the culture of excellence that rewards students who work hard to achieve the best results possible.



to congratulate all these girls and warmly wish them well as they move forward on their faith journey. It will not always be easy, there will be times of doubt and discouragement, but the gifts of the Spirit will be there to provide nourishment and strength.

PTA NEWS

Fathers and daughters share moments

6am Wednesday 4th September was all abuzz! The crew with local 'Traiteurs' Masterchef – Maarten Loeffen, were working hard to be ready for the 7am Father-Daughter breakfast.

The Auditorium was all set in black and white with gorgeous daffodils and yellow roses adorning each table. The heavenly smell of bacon, eggs and hash browns, including fresh fruit, yoghurt, muesli and fresh rolls put smiles all around. Fathers, Granddads, Uncles, brothers and friends joined the girls and loved their delicious breakfast.

A former New Zealand Silver Fern player and Netball Coach Margaret Foster was truly inspirational. The large audience were captivated by her witty, clever and well-presented talk.

A total of 270 enjoyed this great start to the day and we sincerely thank Miss Heenan from the staff, the PTA helpers and our amazing Masterchef, Maarten.

*Father-Daughter
Breakfast 2013*



NEW TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Karen Mountford

Karen joined the Board of Trustees (BOT) in June this year and says it was her belief that education of young people requires a joint effort between families, schools and the wider community that drove her decision to stand for the BOT.

After seeing several of her nieces' progress through Villa Maria College, Karen and her husband Tony had no hesitation enrolling their own daughter. "We were impressed with the education our nieces received and the way they have all gone on to become strong, confident, caring Mercy Women," she says.

Karen spent many years as a Detective for the New Zealand Police which she says taught her a great deal about effectively communicating with a wide variety of people, from many walks of life. These days, Karen and her husband own and operate a successful importing and distribution company that employs over thirty staff and contractors.

With the business, life skills and experiences gained from her previous and current roles, Karen is keen to make a worthwhile contribution to the Villa community as a Board of Trustee member.

Natasha Taylor

Natasha joined the Board of Trustees (BOT) in June this year. She is a Lending Consultant at Westpac Bank and has a daughter currently at Villa and another starting next year in Year 7. Natasha's family also provide board for a Year 12 student who attends Villa.

Her Irish ancestry led her to become involved in the Christchurch Irish Society. She had just stood down as the President of the Society when Villa advertised for

parent representatives for their Board of Trustees. Natasha said it was perfect timing as she needed a new challenge.

"Villa provides such a nurturing environment for our girls; I wanted to give back in some way. I really like the way the girls are inspired to become exceptional women."

At home, Natasha says that her family love to sing while her daughter plays the piano. They also enjoy biking together and walking their very spoilt dog – George!



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FOUNDATION LAUNCHES AHEAD

A special character 'Mercy Scholarship' was announced at the inaugural Cocktail Party of the Villa Maria Foundation. The Scholarship will be awarded annually and based on the Mercy values of compassion, care and spirituality; it will cover the student's education from Years 9 to 13. The Mercy Scholarship aims to further the College's reputation for producing compassionate, involved women.

It was a busy night for the Foundation which also announced that it will present all Year 13 Leavers with a silver charm as a symbol of their Villa Maria education to carry with them in life. The two initiatives were revealed at the Cocktail Party where guests enjoyed quizzing guest speaker Steve Hansen, All Blacks Coach and former Villa Maria father. Hansen talked about yes, rugby but also Catholic

education and its contribution in creating future leaders in our community.

The cocktail party was so successful that enough money was raised to pay for the first scholarship and most of the first year's leavers' gifts.

The Foundation's role is to help secure the financial future of Villa Maria so it may continue to provide leading education for young minds. To make a donation toward the Mercy Scholarship or leavers' gifts, visit Supporters > Foundation on the Villa website: www.villa.school.nz

Above: Guests enjoying the Cocktail Party. (R-L) Fran Pucilowski, Kate Grant, Josephine Oorschot, Debbie Frank

Below: Front Row (R-L) Mary Lynch (Past Principal), Sr Mary Hanrahan (Past Principal), Helen Delaca (Foundation Committee), Tina Duncan (Foundation Chair). Back Row Katie Duncan (Foundation Committee), Deborah Brosnahan (Principal), Steve Hansen (Guest Speaker).



JUSTICE AND PEACE AWARD

Bridgette Thwaites (Year 12) has made the College proud by entering the Multimedia and Essay Contest, a project of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. The topic she was required to address was complex and bigger than most adults would attempt to tackle: 'Our Daily Bread - Putting Food on the Table.' A topic that focused on hunger and poverty in the world and the question posed was: 'What solution can

we propose to the world, and those in positions of influence, to remedy this?'

Contestants had to put their ideas in an essay or a multimedia presentation which explored the Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Bridgette made a short multimedia presentation and was fortunate enough to win the senior section and with it, a cup, \$500 for the College and a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Photo: Bridgette Thwaites (Year 12)



YOUNG SPEECHMAKER OF THE YEAR

Villa Maria College Year 12 student Georgia-Rae Taylor has just been awarded the prestigious title of New Zealand Lions Club Young Speechmaker and will now be winging her way to the United States and Canada.

Georgia-Rae spent the weekend in Auckland contesting the title against some of New Zealand's brightest young orators. She was the youngest contestant at 17 and was unusually speechless when her title was announced!

"I was absolutely stunned," she said. "I was surrounded by 16 other incredibly talented young people and couldn't believe my ears when they announced that I'd won. I believe it was my impromptu speech on the topic of privacy that swung the judges' votes my way."

As well as an impromptu speech, Georgia-Rae was required to deliver her prepared speech which focused on the ability of board games to reflect real life and teach important lessons.

Georgia-Rae is no stranger to the stage with a long history of dancing, she has an eye on pursuing a profession in broadcasting. "I won all my speech competitions in primary school, including the North Canterbury speechmakers back in 2009, so I guess it has always been something I have just loved. It is the same as my dancing; performing is just something I get such a thrill out of

doing it. Performing is my most favourite thing to do in the entire world and I love competition," Georgia-Rae says.

She is also a keen sports woman playing netball, tennis and basketball, and is involved in aerobics and athletics.

In December, Georgia-Rae will be enjoying a six week, all-expenses paid trip to United States and Canada thanks to her win at the Lions Club Young Speechmaker. "I will trip around, sightseeing and staying in different homestays, giving talks on NZ and my life here. I will also attend talks and seminars, meetings and dinners. The thing I am most excited about is getting the chance to have a White Christmas and to see the less touristy side of America. I think this trip will open so many doors and I am so grateful and honoured to have won it. I thank Villa so much for all the support they have given me and encouragement."



Georgia-Rae Taylor (Year 12)

SPEECH MARKS

Villa Maria students are continuing to confirm the College's reputation for producing great orators. This year's Rotary Speech Competition gave our Year 7/8 students a chance to shine winning both Year group titles.

Anna Fox (Year 7) focussed on junk food marketing to kids. Her favourite line from her speech was: "My name is Anna Fox and I'm a target - are you?" She says she likes finding out new information and speech writing makes you investigate things you wouldn't normally.

Ciara Espiner's (Year 8) speech was about the over emphasis on sport in New Zealand society and how we should celebrate the arts more.

Ciara says the favourite line in her speech would have to be: "In contrast, Rugby player Richie McCaw was helicoptered to the top of a hill, where he made some soup and had a photo shoot with a bird.

This story made the front page of our national newspaper!"

She says she likes the preparation phase of speech more than the presenting of it. "I love to go to the competitions to compete and listen to the other talented people who made it through to the Rotary speech finals," she says.

Both Anna and Ciara received \$150 worth of book vouchers from the Riccarton Rotary Club. The school received \$500 to spend on anything of their choice. On the 8th of July, the girls were invited to present their speeches at a Rotary lunch meeting and receive their prize cups.

Rotary Speech Competitors,
Ciara Espiner (Year 8) and
Anna Fox (Year 7)

I love to go to the competitions to compete and listen to the other talented people who made it through to the Rotary speech finals.





THE BIG SING

The Big Sing is an annual secondary schools choral competition unique to New Zealand.

This year more than 9000 students took part nationwide, including two choirs from Villa: Con Brio and Spiritoso. The competition began in early June with choirs from all over New Zealand competing within their regions. Performances must include three pieces from given categories including New Zealand Composition, European Composition, and Post-1900. The regional competitions conclude with a gala concert in which all the choirs perform one piece, as well as taking part in a

massed item – when all the choirs fill the stage. Con Brio performed exceptionally and was awarded Best Girls Choir (tied with Burnside’s Bel Canto). This effort was rewarded further with the later announcement that Con Brio, among only 18 choirs from across the country, had made it through to Nationals, held this year in Dunedin.

We began work straight away, rehearsing at least three times a week, as we had to prepare an additional three pieces, while continuing work on the first set.

We left for Dunedin on Wednesday 28th August, and after a surprisingly quiet bus trip (we’d been instructed not to ruin our voices by talking too much!) we arrived at our destination. The next four days went by in a whirlwind of rehearsing, competing, watching the other choirs, performing in “flash choirs” around the city, and meeting heaps of interesting and like-minded people! The girls sang their hearts out, and represented the school with passion and pride. The support we received was amazing, and receiving a standing ovation after our performance at the gala concert on Saturday night was very humbling.

After the judges’ deliberations, Con Brio was presented with a bronze award and, while we had hoped for higher honours, we were humbled by all the praise we received from various other directors, choir members and choral professionals, several of whom commented that we had produced some very exciting and moving music.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without significant help and assistance from the Villa community – especially parents and teachers. A fundraising committee worked hard to help subsidise the cost of the trip, and we are grateful for the support of the community at our Villa Voices concert. The Choir is also indebted to the teachers and parents who looked after us in Dunedin – Mr McCabe, Mrs Marquet, Ms Maguire, David Johnstone, Gary Geeves, Maartin Loeffen and Mere Skerrett – and the generous support of Ms Brosnahan; we are all extremely grateful for all the work you put in to make our stay enjoyable. Finally, we would never have even dreamed of being where we are now if it weren’t for our incredibly talented, hard-working and experienced Choir Director Ravil Atlas. Thank you all so much for giving us such an amazing opportunity; something which will be considered by many as the highlight of the year!

By Elish Espiner

NEW CHOIR DIRECTOR

Ravil Atlas has recently been appointed Choir Director of Villa’s Award winning Con Brio.

Ravil has enjoyed a distinguished and varied career in opera, musical theatre and concert for more than 25 years. He has starred as the leading tenor in more than 70 professional opera productions in six countries, accumulated more than five years of service in long-running Broadway musicals, and has taught many other professional singers and actors at the highest level.

In addition to performing, Ravil has been

active as a teacher, researcher, producer, director and writer. Since arriving in Christchurch in late 2009, Ravil has quickly established himself as one of the preeminent voice experts in New Zealand. Affiliation as tutor, performer, lecturer, conductor and advisor include the National Singing School in Napier, the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts (NASDA), The University of Otago and Canterbury, The Invercargill Arts Festival, The National Youth Choir, The Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Southern Opera, Showbiz Christchurch, Chant et Danse and Burnside High School, St Andrew’s College and Hagley High School.

Ravil’s skill has already been rewarded with Con Brio winning Most Outstanding



Choir Director : Ravil Atlas

Girls’ Choir and Best Performance of Category 2 (European Composition) at the 2013 Regional Big Sing, along with a Bronze award at the National Big Sing competition.

BRAINY CHALLENGE

Villa Maria College students have taken both individual and team top honours at the 2013 International Brain Bee Challenge, held at Otago University.

The Challenge includes Year 11 students competing to determine who is the "best brain" on such topics as intelligence, memory, emotions, sensations, movement, stress, aging, sleep, addiction, Alzheimer's and stroke. The Challenge was founded by scientist, Dr Norbert Myslinski in the USA and now competitions take place worldwide culminating in

an International Brain Bee Championship.

Villa's Milly Young won the individual challenge beating 90 Year 11 pupils from 19 South Island secondary schools to secure her title.

Not only did our Villa girls excel in the individual challenge but we also won the team's event. Our congratulations go to team members Milly Young, Julia Thwaites, Maya Cox and Isabella Walsh.

Milly will now attend the Australasian Neuroscience Society annual meeting in Adelaide in January, to take part in the Brain Bee Challenge National Final, where



she will go head to head with the North Island's round-two winner and Australian winners.

A China Robin

by Philippa McMenamin

You're dust splattered into the night sky shaken free of stars
 One of those nights where the sky feels sort of closer than usual
 As if you could swallow it, or bathe in it, or just swim within its depths
 You're the girl I see in the mirror
 The one with the face cracked all the way down as if carved of china doll fragments
 You're way up there with the greats
 You're better than them all
 You've hooked your ribs within those of
 The sullen boy whose ruby eyes bled into his soul
 Somehow I see you reflected in the stormy pavement
 And the cinderblock sky
 In the words that I can't say
 And my shouts which fall to whispers
 You're like a tree which falls in an emptied forest
 You're like a tear that soaks into your pillow at night
 You're the kind of person whose petals feel exactly like thorns
 You've plucked away at your angel wings
 On the shoulder where angels often graze, I see only another devil
 You're someone I choose to think about
 Because the pain of you is like huffing paint
 Because even though you're a relic
 And you've nested deep within my skull
 Speaking only in migraines
 You've curved mountains in my shoulders
 Knitted a knot within my spine
 I'm huffing air
 And breathing paint
 I'm certain that you're the sunlight which illuminates those sad sparkly granules of dust
 I hope that wherever you are, you are somewhere
 I hope that heaven isn't dirt in the ground
 I hope heaven heals wounds you can't lick clean yourself
 And I hope that you shake hands with Athena
 Strong and wise like you
 I'm sure that you painted the last pink sky I saw
 Because I know I saw that dress you used to wear in it
 You're up there with the greats
 But none as great as you

TOP POET

Villa student, Philippa McMenamin (Year 12) was one of 10 finalists in The National Schools Poetry Award; a poetry competition for Year 12 and 13 secondary school students, organised by New Zealand's most prestigious creative writing programme, Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML).

We are delighted to be able to publish Philippa's winning poem for you.



SPORTS NEWS

New Zealand Secondary Schools' Aerobics

In August five Villa girls travelled to Auckland to compete in the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Aerobics Championships. They had an outstanding weekend and we congratulate Natalie Burrell, Georgia-Rae Taylor and Hannah Watt who won the Step 6 Teams category and Sam Doig and Isabella Scandrett who were placed 3rd in the Step 6 Pairs category. Both are outstanding results! We also thank Mrs Jackson for giving up her time to travel with the team.

Hockey

At Tournament Week this year our 1st XI Hockey Team created Villa history by coming 3rd= in Federation Cup, held in Rotorua. This is the best a Villa hockey team has performed at Nationals and we are very proud of them. The week's results were:

Pool Play

- vs St Matthews Collegiate, drew 1-1
- vs Carmel College, drew 3-3
- vs Rangī Ruru, won 2-0
- vs St Hildas, won 2-1
- vs St Margarets, lost 1-0
- vs St Cuthberts College, drew 1-1

WELL DONE TEAM!!!

Swimming

Four girls travelled to Hamilton to compete in the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Swimming Championships. And all four came away as NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!! Their results are amazing:

200 Medley Relay - 1st! (Virginia Hogan, Caitlin Rennell, Emily Rennell, Laura Sugrue)

200 Freestyle Relay - 3rd.

Laura Sugrue - 1st 50 Breaststroke, 2nd 200 Breaststroke, 2nd 100 Breaststroke

Emily Rennell - 1st 50 Fly (and Meet record!), 3rd 100 Fly

Caitlin Rennell - 2nd 100 Fly, 2nd 200 Backstroke, 2nd 200 Fly, 3rd 200 Individual Medley

New Zealand Reps

Mikayla Wieblitz (Year 12) has been selected in the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Football Team. This team is travelling to Thailand in late September to play against different National teams.

Amelia Coleman (Year 12) has recently competed for New Zealand in Italy in

the Pesaro World Cup where she was in competition against the top gymnasts in the world - what an amazing opportunity and just reward for the hours of hard training!

Kahlia Godinet (Year 10) has been selected in the New Zealand Under 15 Girls' Touch Team. Kahlia travelled to Australia in September to play in a Trans-Tasman series.

Nicole Connolly (Year 10) competed in the New Zealand Rhythmic Gymnastics Team in June in the Singapore Open in Singapore.

Madaline Davidson (Year 10) has been named in the New Zealand World Age Trampoline Team and travels to Bulgaria in November.



Mikayla Wieblitz



Amelia Coleman



Kahlia Godinet



Nicole Connolly



Madaline Davidson

STATIONERY STASH

Mercy Spirit in Action

In term three, Year 10G Social Studies class spent time learning about poverty in New Zealand. Toward the end of the term they decided to take some action to help other school children less fortunate than themselves. In conjunction with Kids Can, 10G decided to work with Gilberthorpe School - a decile 1 school in Hei Hei. They asked children at Gilberthorpe School to tell them their most popular stationery items and then set about offering Villa girls the opportunity to donate money toward the purchase of items like pencils, rubbers and glue sticks.

The response was fantastic and enabled 10G to provide Gilberthorpe School children with 600 pencils, 163 erasers, 300 motivational erasers with messages and 240 glue sticks.

10G students would also like to thank stationery supplier Eeny Meeny who donated 130 packets of crayons to go to the kids of Gilberthorpe School.



Year 10G Social Studies Class







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Stacey Morgan,
CPIT Bachelor of Nursing graduate.

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SPELLING BEE

By Alice Scott Year 10

On Tuesday the 13th of August, ten Year 9 and 10 students participated in the Vegemite Regional Spelling Bee. There were 28 competitors from all around Canterbury, ranging from Picton to Timaru. The first round started with a written spelling test of 20 words, and then one oral word on stage. After that, 17 people, who scored 17 or higher out of the 21 words were called back to the stage.

All of the girls from Villa went through to that round. From then on, all of the words were to be spelt on stage, which was trickier than writing them down.

Almost all of the Villa girls stayed in until Round Four, when the words started to get harder. When it came down to the top eight, there were no boys left in the competition!!

When the competition got to the top five spellers, there were three girls from Villa and two girls from other schools; we knew that at least one of our girls was going to end up in the National Spelling Bee in Wellington because they take the top three. After eight rounds, our very own Emily McCulloch from Year 10 was awarded third place; she now has to study for the National Spelling Bee Final in October,

where she gets an all-expenses paid trip to Wellington for herself and one caregiver.

We are all very proud of Emily for making it to the Nationals. All in all it was a nerve-wracking but fun experience for everyone who participated.

When it came down to the top eight, there were no boys left in the competition!!



Vegemite Regional Spelling Bee Contestants

Back row left to right: Molly Millar, Georgia Freeman, Alice Scott, Emily McCulloch, Isabel Van Tuinen
Front row left to right: Amber Wiesehutter, Amy Inwood, Alishka Thiele, Sara Dickson, Madeline White



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ARCHIVES

Can You Help?

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. We'd also appreciate your help in identifying past pupils in photos that we print in each edition of VMail, and put on the website.

You may also like to tell other past pupils about the archive project and the VMail newsletter. Please encourage them to make contact with the College.

If you know the names and the approximate date of these photos we'd love to hear from you. Sister Maureen (Archives Manager) can be contacted by email - mge@villa.school.nz or by phoning the school office - (03) 348 4165



CELEBRATING YEAR OF FAITH

The Christchurch Diocese is celebrating the Year of Faith with a pilgrimage of the 'Mary Mother of the Church' icon across parishes and schools. The icon was commissioned by the Bishop of Christchurch, Barry Jones.

After being hosted by Catholic Cathedral College, it was handed over to Villa Maria College on 5th July 2013 by Mr Tony Shaw, Principal of Catholic Cathedral College and formerly Deputy Principal at VMC. He was accompanied by some teachers and students. The next week a contingent from Villa visited Our Lady

of Victories School to hand it over to them. The Principal, Ms Brosnahan, as well as Mrs Ronel Moore and some of the Service Captains appreciated and enjoyed attending the special liturgy arranged for this occasion.

During the stay of the icon at Villa Maria College, each Religious Studies class was given a turn to spend time in front of the icon in prayer. Students and staff members enjoyed the opportunity it afforded for some quiet contemplation and to have the symbolism explained to them.

Recently the Bishop donated beautiful

prayer cards with a depiction of the icon to each student in the diocese. It is a beautiful memento of the Year of Faith.





It was a lovely time together, all of us having a common bond as Villa "girls".

MERCY DAY CELEBRATION KAIKOURA - SEPTEMBER 2012

The Past Pupils' Association plans to hold a Top of the South function around Mercy Day each year outside of Christchurch, and will meet in Kaikoura, Blenheim or Nelson. So on Sunday 15th September last year, 14 past pupils gathered in Kaikoura to celebrate Mercy Day with Mass and lunch. There were 6 past pupils from Kaikoura, 3 from Blenheim, 1 from Nelson and 4 from Christchurch attending. We gathered for Mass at Sacred Heart Church, followed by morning tea at the Dolphin Encounter and then a great lunch at Donegal House. It was a lovely time together, all of us having a common bond as Villa "girls".



Mercy Day Celebration Kaikoura

- Back row:** Marie Spencer (O'Halloran), Judith Cleary (Eaton), Margaret Chapman (Phillips), Barbara McIntosh (Leach), Joan-Maria Peoples, Gillian Smith
Middle row: Janice Torrance (Coleman), Patsy Buttle (Maloney), Maureen Leggett (Maloney), Heather Laugesen (Smith), Gillian Carpenter
Front row: Debbie Frank (Cantwell), Terri Sonal (Curd), Madeleine Hoadley-Currie

PAST PUPILS' NEWS

Annual Lunch 2013

June saw 19 past pupils gather at the Rosebank Winery for a very pleasant few hours together for the Annual Lunch of the Association. We were pleased to have the company of Principal Deborah Brosnahan and to welcome two new faces to our gatherings - Elizabeth Robertson (Crutchley) and Theresa Foster (O'Malley). We enjoyed good food, wine and company - how satisfying it would be to have double that number attend our lunch next year. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Year of 1963

Our class reunion in October is fast approaching and we are thrilled to have traced 80 former classmates and are still looking for 11. We wonder if any of VMail's readers have any knowledge of the whereabouts of Valerie Carr, Judith Clearwater, Delia Clark, Pat Gregory-Hunt, Marlene Haar, Leonie Murphy, Maria Packer,



Catherine Rennie, Christine Rogerson, Elizabeth Keating and Tricia Rouse.
 If you can help give Debbie a call on (03) 366 3300.

Annual Lunch 2013, Rosebank Winery.

PAST PUPIL PROFILES

Anna Galvan (nec Veronese) VMC 1992-1996

Anna is best known for her sterling netball career which spanned 17 years and included playing for the Silver Ferns and the Tactix as Vice Captain. Her career highlight was going to the Manchester Commonwealth Games and getting a Silver Medal after losing to Australia in the Gold medal match in double extra time.

She recently retired from her semi-professional netball career and now works part-time for Sport Canterbury as an Athlete Manager, managing a programme for

young, elite athletes. Anna also runs an in-bound tour company called Total Netball which brings Netball tour groups to New Zealand. On top of an already busy schedule she finds time to run a fitness 'boot camp' for men!

After leaving Villa Maria, Anna gained a Bachelor of Education Specialising in Physical Education and a Graduate Diploma of Teaching and Learning from the University of Canterbury. She went on to study through Victoria University in Melbourne for a Graduate Certificate in Career Counselling for Elite Performers.

Anna has studied, worked and raised three children throughout her netball career and says it has been a rewarding journey.

Her memories of Villa Maria College always involve netball or sport, friends and teachers! "It was certainly a fun time in my life," says Anna. "I am still great friends with some of the girls I went to school with. There is a group of about 10 of us who catch up as much as possible. These catch ups are always filled with lots of laughter."

In terms of netball, Anna remembers Bernice Mene being selected in the Silver Ferns while she was in third form (Year 9). "That was a real buzz for Bernie and for our Villa community," she says. "Bernie was a great role model for us young girls coming through; being a Silver Fern seemed so much more achievable and real knowing someone who had done it, especially someone from my school. I remember Sally Mene having a huge impact on my career and also Kate Watson as our Villa Coach."

Anna's message to our current Villa girls is: "Set yourself goals. Big hairy audacious goals! Write them down and work hard to achieve them.

When I was eight years old, I wrote down that I wanted to be a Silver Fern and I wanted to go to the Commonwealth Games (after watching the 1986 Commonwealth Games on TV).

Never be afraid of going outside your comfort zone and taking risks as this is what can open you up to exciting possibilities. And try to get out of NZ once in a while to experience other cultures and especially their food! Live life to the fullest, life is not a dress rehearsal!"



Nicki McFadzien VMC 2004-2009

Nicki's passion for running long distances began while she was a student at Villa and has continued to play a big part in her life. It's been a great year for Nicki winning the Christchurch Marathon 10km in a record time of 34.31 minutes, and becoming New Zealand's Senior Women's Cross Country Champion; she's now training for the Auckland Half Marathon in November!

After graduating from Villa in 2009, Nicki studied toward a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Education at the University of Canterbury. She graduated in 2012 and is currently training to be a primary school teacher at the New Zealand Graduate School of Education.

Nicki says she is grateful for the support

that the teachers at Villa gave her throughout her running ventures at school. In amongst her study and other commitments she trained hard and competed at two World Cross Country Championships in both Jordan and Poland gaining placings of 36th and 28th respectively.

When reflecting on her Villa days Nicki says: "My friends that I have today are my Villa friends, they are lifelong and I am now beginning to realise how great high school really was. It is so easy to stay in touch with your friends but after high school, many move away and start careers. Enjoy it while it lasts- school is awesome!"

Nicki's final piece of advice for our current Villa girls: "Love what you do and try your best and happiness will come naturally."



Nicole van Dugteren
VMC 2003-2009

Nicole is in her fourth year at the University of Canterbury completing a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Accounting and Finance. She recently came to our attention when she featured in the Western News as one of the winners of the international accounting competition - The Naked CEO. The competition is organised by one of the world's largest accounting bodies, CPA Australia.

Entrants had to submit an accounting question to CPA's Chief Executive who selected the six best and invited them over to their head office in Melbourne for two days of mentoring and teaching.

Nicole says: "Winning the Naked CEO competition was such an enjoyable experience. I got to meet some hugely inspiring leaders in the accounting and finance world, all while staying in the 5 star Crown Hotel, and enjoying some of the most amazing food I think I will ever experience. I have learnt some invaluable life and career lessons, and opened some

amazing doors for my future accounting career."

Nicole says she looks back on her time at Villa fondly. A distinct memory she has is the way in which Mr Shaw had the skill and ability to be so patient with a class full of easily distracted, chatty girls!

"Studying at Villa has shaped me in many different ways; starting in Year 7 in the Intermediate Department with Mrs Devonport was a great foundation. I remember in Year 7 writing a letter to our seventh form selves focusing on who we were today and who we aspired to be. I still have this letter and it really showed us all how much, without even noticing, we changed throughout our Villa Maria lives."

Nicole has a message too for our Year 13 girls as they contemplate life after Villa. "Take the process of deciding what you want to do next year slowly and don't be scared to stray from what your friends are doing. Often it is the

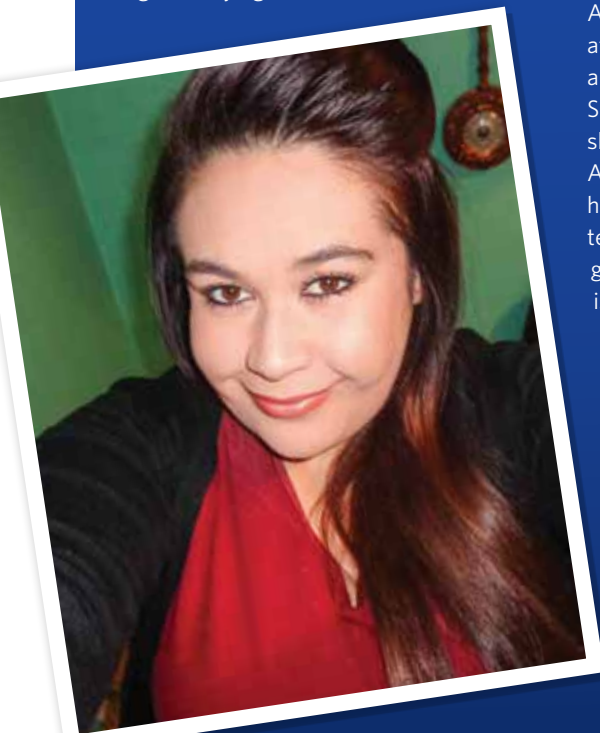
things that scare you ultimately reward you the most."



Photo by Gilbert Wealleans

Petrina Wilkinson
VMC 2000 – 2004

Petrina graduated from Villa in 2004 and began studying toward a



Bachelor of Teaching and Learning at the University of Canterbury in 2007.

While studying, Petrina taught Pasifika dance at several intermediate schools. After completing her degree she relieved at Chisnallwood Intermediate School and then secured a job at Christchurch South Intermediate School; where she has taught for the last six years. As well as teaching a Year 8 class she has also assumed responsibilities as teacher in charge of the Pasifika cultural group, PolyChoir [Pasifika choir], and is on the school curriculum team. Petrina monitors the education of Pasifika students at Christchurch South Intermediate and works with other Pasifika teachers outside of her school to keep up-to-date with initiatives.

Petrina says she was always proud to go to Villa Maria College. "The education at Villa was at a level where success was fostered for all, if you weren't achieving there were systems in place to get you to where you needed to be. I felt

pushed to excel and when excellence was achieved it was celebrated; a rich culture at the school that helped me in my journey to becoming a teacher."

Petrina has distinct memories of her English classes and teachers who believed in her. "They instilled within us the attitude that we could do anything we set our minds to. She made some great friendships at Villa that are still strong now, 10 years after leaving. Being part of the school's Pasifika group was also a highlight for Petrina. She loved performing as a group and becoming more aware of Pasifika in the Christchurch community.

A piece of advice that Petrina was given at Villa and believes should be passed on to all Villa girls, is to give nothing less than your best. "So if it is the absolute best that you can give, and you can leave feeling like you have accomplished something, you are on the right track," she says.



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Sophie Hale VMC 2007-2012

Sophie left Villa last year and was the deserving recipient of a University of Canterbury Emerging Leaders' Scholarship for 2013. The Scholarship included \$5000 off her tuition fees and involvement in a comprehensive leadership programme which Sophie says has been fantastic. "It's immensely rewarding for me, and has emphases on service, improving leadership skills and using our skills/talents in the best way to help others and achieve our greatest potential. The Emerging Leaders' Development Programme (ELDP) does not just end for me this year; there are opportunities for continued involvement as a leader for the students who gain the Scholarships in 2014."

Sophie is studying toward a Bachelor of Science majoring in biological science and economics. "At this stage I want to complete my degree with an endorsement in Biosecurity, hopefully with Honours," says Sophie.

Sophie has many wonderful memories of her time at Villa: "I loved it and got so much out of my time there, especially in the senior years. I will never forget the amazing people at Villa. I was so lucky to have such dedicated teachers; it really makes a difference. I made friends for life for which I am really grateful. My best memories include: Mercy winning Choral Fest, antics in Year 13 Calculus, making a snowman during lunchtime, Football Nationals in Taupo last year, various music camps, Mercy Day, and I could easily continue!"

When asked how her Villa education shaped her, Sophie identifies her personal journey from a scared Year 9 student to a confident Mercy woman. "I had the motivation but Villa provided me with the support and materials necessary for me to achieve my goals. The Special Character of Villa enabled me to find and grow my faith."

Sophie urges current Villa girls to make the most of every opportunity and be proud to be a Villa girl. "Treasure the time



you get to spend with your friends and seeing them every day; you'll miss this when you're out in the big wide world." She also has a message for our Year 12 and 13 girls: "Put the work in now, it will make such a difference and lessen your load once you hit university. I can't stress how important it is to get into good habits and work hard."

PAST PUPILS' ASSOCIATION

Dear Past Pupils

Our Association is in its 65th year!

Our sympathy, love and prayers to our Marlborough members at this time especially our 'Girls' and families in Seddon. I hope the sunny days and spring flowers help and cheer you a little.

Congratulations to Georgia-Rae Taylor, a Year 12 student from Villa who has won the Lions Young Speechmakers Contest for 2013. As First prize winner Georgia-Rae will spend approx. 5 weeks in USA and Canada on a NZ Youth Exchange Programme, hosted by their local Lions International Clubs where she will be expected to speak on NZ, this is a great achievement for one so young. Our thanks to Wigram Lions Club for sponsoring Georgia-Rae in this prestigious event. We are very proud of Georgia-Rae; the Association has given Georgia-Rae a cheque to assist with her expenses.

Since our last VMail our Association has hosted the annual June Mid-Winter Luncheon at Rosebank, a lovely meal, beautiful venue and special company made for a super day. Photos were taken and can be viewed in this edition, photos from the Kaikoura luncheon Sept 2012 also. Thank you to all who make the effort to attend these functions, it is lovely to catch up, and makes all the organising worth it, please keep coming.

Please remember 5th Fridays, owing to earthquake damage at the Chateau, we have a change of venue, at the moment The Elms on Papanui Rd. Do take care turning into The Elms and perhaps we could look at an easier venue at a later date. Remember too that husbands, partners are always welcome at these 'get togethers'.

When this goes to print we will have had our 'Top of The South Mercy Celebrations' in Blenheim. Thank you (in advance) for attending. Next year's event will be in Nelson 20th September 2014, start planning now, husbands, partners are always welcome also.

The Class of 1963 are holding their Class reunion, details elsewhere in this edition

The Class of 1954 will be celebrating their 60th anniversary 21-23rd March and expect almost a full muster, details on this event from Jane Tyler-Gordon, Jane.tyler-gordon@clear.net.nz

As this will be the last VMail for the year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my committee for their dedication and support, and wish you all a Merry Christmas, good health and happiness for the New Year.

God Bless
Madeleine Hoadley-Currie

President
Past Pupils' Association

DATES TO REMEMBER

Committee Meetings

27th November 2013
26th February 2014
28th May 2014
27th August 2014
29th October - Biennial Meeting
26th November 2014

5th Fridays at The Elms on Papanui Rd, 5:30pm

29th November 2013
30th May 2014
29th August 2014
31st October 2014

Mid- Winter Luncheon at Rosebank Estate

29th June 2014

Top of the South Mercy Celebrations Nelson

21st September 2014

Leavers' Morning Tea

31st October 2013, 11am, College Auditorium

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Email: villa@villa.school.nz

Obituaries

Many of our Past Pupils have lost loved ones this past year, our love and prayers go to them, and please remember our Sisters of Mercy in your prayers also.



SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE VILLA MARIA PAST PUPIL'S ASSOCIATION

Christian Names:

Started college:

Finished College:

Maiden Name:

Surname:

Address:

Telephone:

Email: