With 2013 drawing to a close, we have much to celebrate at Milpera State High School. Student numbers have reached a record of 322, the largest ever enrolment for Milpera on a single campus. With this growth in numbers has come a demand for more rooms, furniture and volunteers to support our wonderful teachers and teacher aides.

Work is almost complete on our new teaching block containing Rooms 24, 25 and 26. This consists of a classroom, a Mathematics tutorial room and a classroom/kitchen incorporating three sinks and four ovens and cooktops. These teaching spaces should be ready for the new school year. Next February work will commence on the refurbishment of our Library to create a 21st Century teaching and learning space, incorporating both print and electronic reading and research resources.

2014 will also see the completion of a major landscaping and grounds project to create more sporting and relaxation areas for the school’s growing population. A landscape architect will be engaged with this project to provide for the school’s needs for the next 20 years.

Over this term there have been many exciting learning experiences at the school. Students have gone on camps to the Numinbah Valley and Stanley River Environmental Education Centres. We have had a major swimming and surf-safety program. Great art works have been produced, students have played in sporting competitions and a lot of learning has taken place in each and every classroom and learning space.

This term we see the exit of five classes to destination schools and TAFE. We wish them well for the future! On behalf of all the students in the school I would like to thank all the dedicated teachers, teacher-aides, volunteers, welfare personnel and the office, grounds and cleaning staff for all their hard work in 2013. Milpera’s deep learning, harmony and supportive environment is a product of a genuine collective effort. Finally I would like to wish everyone a relaxing and interesting summer vacation and look forward to working with you all again in 2014.

Best wishes, Tom Beck (Principal)

Milpera earns Tuckshop Awards (again!)

The Qld Association of School Tuckshops (QAST) has awarded Milpera tuckshop the 2013 Community Service Award for embracing cultural diversity so capably. The engraved trophy is in the shape of a glass triangular wedge. Our tuckshop convenors were also awarded a “Special Commendation” for Queensland’s Tuckshop of the Year Award, 2013.

Everyday Mrs Mavis Renton and Mrs Selma Mesalic cook and prepare fresh, nutritious and culturally appropriate lunches for our appreciative students and staff. In this important way, the tuckshop provides an essential foundation for our students’ readiness to learn and for our whole school community’s health and sense of well-being.

Thank you to Mavis and Selma and all helpers!
Coles Warehouse Visit

Rooms 16 and 17 students were wide-eyed at the size of the warehouse when they visited Coles Distribution Centre on 30 October. The tour began with a short introduction to the many employment opportunities available to over 18s at the warehouse. The students followed the yellow safety lines as they toured the immense warehouse and observed employees at work, products stacked from floor to ceiling and vehicles negotiating the busy aisles. Morning tea with our tour guides presented an opportunity for the students to ask further questions.

St Joseph’s College fosters Team Building

The senior school exiting classes have been busy with excursions over the last few weeks. On 23 October, Room 16 students were invited to join the Year 11 boys from St Joseph’s College for their leadership activities at Main Beach, Southport. Our students enjoyed team building activities in the form of a sand castle competition and games on the beach. This presented a valuable opportunity for conversation and socialising. They were later treated to a delicious barbecue lunch.

CSIRO Science Show as Cool as Ice

The CSIRO Science Show this term was very well received; as students reported:

“The Science Show today was about air pressure, low pressure and high pressure. I also learnt about liquid nitrogen and dry ice, which are very cold things. I think it was a really interesting show. The teacher was very intelligent because she knew a lot about the pressure of the air and all the cold things. She showed us the result if you put a leaf in the liquid nitrogen, it was unbelievable. The best part was when the science teacher tried to reproduce clouds with liquid nitrogen and hot water. I couldn’t believe that making clouds was possible, but when she put those things together, it really made clouds.”

After the show, students from Rooms 5 & 11 (photos above) also worked in small groups to construct sirens, lights, and radios using electric circuit kits.

Gift for Mobility

As a friend of Milpera, Louise Remmerswaal has kindly donated a new wheelchair to Mohammad in room 12. He now has a robust and properly fitting wheelchair. Mohammad took to his new wheelchair quickly and can now be seen using his proficient wheelchair skills to zip around the school. A Big “Thank you” to Louise. Go Mohammad! (written by Bianca)
Futures Day
2013
Milpera Futures Day, presenting pathways forward and possible careers, was again a huge success this year. Over 300 students and 16 presenters participated in the event. Brisbane City Council presenters included those from Transport, Library Services, Environmental Science, and Plumbing Services. All the presenters were warmly received.

“I really enjoyed Futures Day…it was especially suitable for us.” “It was really fun.” “I like the Brisbane buses.”

“I learned a lot of new things about those jobs.”

“It was a great day because I have lots of new words and I also learned how to get a job.”

The visual nature of the presentations and the hands-on approach is exactly what our students require when investigating the world of work in Australia.

Friends of HEAL, Home of Expressive Art & Learning Event

The launch on 2nd November, 2013 was a successful evening on all accounts. We raised much-needed funds, importantly we raised awareness of the wonderful work HEAL provides and we also kicked up our heels in celebration.

Thank you to all those who helped celebrate and those who gave so generously to make the launch so successful. The gift cards and perpetual calendars are available to purchase – they would make beautiful Christmas gifts.

Further details are available on our website, www.fheal.com.au

City Square Library Tours

This term Rooms 17 & 23 enjoyed tours of the Brisbane City Square library in George Street. Under the guidance of Ms Colleen Hobdell, the BCC librarian (below), the students learnt how to use the library’s facilities and online catalogue for research, computer access, and recreational reading. They also accessed the English language learning section and the community languages section, and applied for their library membership cards, all of which should assist in their pursuit of lifelong learning.
Learn to Swim & 
Surf Safety Training

This term 10 classes participated in a 5-week intensive swimming program at the Corinda Dunlop pool. All students made a significant improvement and demonstrated how to be safe in and around water. Room 10 were outstanding with their attendance record and remembering to bring all their gear.

In late November the whole school participated in surf safety training; with a different group travelling to Currimbin Beach on the Gold Coast by bus each day, for three consecutive days.

The surf and beach sports training was provided by Mr. Scott Harrison and his team of lifesavers, from the Multicultural Inclusion Unit of SLSQ. Scott has visited Milpera regularly over the past few years to give surf safety lessons, followed up by hands-on Gold Coast training. For some students from land-locked countries, this was their first time to “see the sea.”

Basketball Knockout

During Term 4 our student leaders have organised an inter-class basketball competition during lunchtimes. Students from both the Senior and Junior School have competed in a knock out competition with games lasting 10 minutes. There have been tense moments on the court and even a free-throw shootout in sudden death in the game between Room 21 and 22 to determine the winner.

All classes played well and in the spirit of sportsmanship and teamwork. Congratulations to the winners and a special thank you to the Student Council and especially Alice from Room 10 for organising such a fantastic event.

(by Oliver Ryan)

Skipping

A poem by Alan Adams, Milpera volunteer

I believe to be able to skip you must be happy. Truly happy.
You can walk when you are sad.
And ambling is often the pastime of the lonely.
Anger can help you run fast.
And fear; faster still.
But skipping requires a certain lightness of heart and spirit.
A certain inner happiness not easily put into words.

Last Friday at Milpera I watched as a young girl skipped between classes.
As she passed I smiled and she returned the most beautiful smile.
She skipped away and soon was gone.
No matter how I try, my clumsy words can never convey the simple joy of that special moment.
My wish is that all at Milpera will feel the need to skip.

Birtukan’s Sports Award

A Big “Congratulations” to Birtukan Ayalew (centre) who won the “ACHPER Women in Sports Rising Stars Award” this term. Birtukan was selected out of all the girls in Queensland and was given the award based on her fantastic cross-country and AFL achievements this term!