Welcome to the first newsletter for 2014! It has been an exciting start to the year with record enrolments and a record number of classes. Due to the meticulous planning by Deputy Principal Helen Byrne and the careful stewardship of Acting Deputy Principal Donna Torr, the year got off to a very smooth start with students allocated to their rooms and learning immediately. The staff new to the school have fitted in well and relish their duties here at what is a unique school in Queensland.

2014 also marked the opening of our new teaching spaces in K Block; Rooms 24, 25 and 26. These are a classroom, a Maths support room to provide Mr Le and Ms Simmons and their students with a better teaching and learning space (photo left), and a classroom/kitchen/sewing room. These air-conditioned facilities provide a major upgrade to the school and ensure that students are beginning their learning journey in Australia in inspirational facilities, the equal of any in the state.

The introduction of the Great Results Guarantee (GRG) program has enabled the school to commence a number of projects, some immediately practical and some with important long-term benefits. Using GRG funding we have already doubled the Maths support provided to identified students and have begun the process of developing a “Help Our Writing” program for students with beginning English literacy. We have also commenced a research partnership with Queensland University of Technology and the Australian Catholic University and will soon begin a program of mentoring and collegial support to help improve further the classroom pedagogies of our teachers.

Finally the Library refurbishment is almost complete with walls removed and some furniture delivered. I would like to commend the school’s teacher librarian Lyn Maykin-Perez for her dogged persistence in ensuring the highest standards of planning and workmanship over the project that will result in a refurbished library well equipped for Twenty-first century learning. With the modifications completed so far, the Library seems to be so much larger and a more welcoming research space.

As always, being Principal at Milpera this term has been an absolute pleasure! This is due to leading an expert, dedicated staff and a student population that is happy to be here and anxious to learn.

We wish the four classes exiting, plus some additional students, “all the best” in their new schools or learning places and trust the year will continue to be as successful as its beginning!

Best wishes
Tom Beck (Principal)
Room 17 at Stanley River Environmental Education Centre

In Term 1 all the students in Room 17 went on a wonderful overnight excursion to Stanley River EEC. It was very interesting and enjoyable, and the first time camping for many students.

We learned many new and important skills. We played lots of fun teamwork games. We learned how to cook delicious damper over the fire. The most exciting activity was canoing, but it was tiring because we paddled 6 km around ‘Discovery Island.’ Mr Eddy, the BBQ expert, was the best chef and he made us a fabulous dinner with the students’ help.

When darkness came, making a catapult and shooting it was lots of fun. We also went on a night walk. It was amazing to see so many stars in the sky and it felt very peaceful. We also learned about the Southern Cross. We slept in dormitories and went out early the next morning to look for animals. We saw many kangaroos and magpies, but sadly no koalas. Our class is very happy and united, and this camp was one of the unforgettable moments for all of us.  Written by Room 17

Rewarding Work Experiences!

Each term, some senior school students have the opportunity to go to work experience in a business to find out about the world of work. This term we placed seven students at Bunnings, Officeworks and Montessori Children’s House. This is what Jia wrote about her work experience in child care: “This experience trained me to be independent and to take care of others. I enjoyed playing different games and doing jigsaw puzzles with the children. I saw that children who were only four or five years old could do everything themselves. They could make their beds, have their lunch or morning teas, and they could wash their plates themselves. They were very independent. From this experience, I learned that I need to do things myself and try to do hard things.”

Room 20 students recalled their experience as follows:

On the 25th and 26th February, Tuyen, Ying, Soraya and Refat from Room 20 went to McDonalds’ Head Office for their Work Inspiration Programme.

It was a wonderful experience and we learned many things. One thing we learned was how to match personality type to job choice. As well, we learned about the organisation of the restaurant and the way an office works. We also listened to guest speakers and we prepared a presentation about them. Going to McDonalds was an interesting and great learning experience. Then we designed the packaging for a new product that we named for McDonalds’ food. We produced “McNoodles”, “McFruit Juice” and a “McCone” with chocolate.

Ask your teacher about work experience for next term!

Right: Thank you to our Student leaders this term, who organised several successful school-wide projects.
Boomerangs return for Room 5

Recently Mr Gordon came to Room 5 to teach us about Aboriginal culture. When Mr Gordon was in our class, he taught us how to play the didgeridoo. Then he took us to the football field and showed us how to throw a boomerang. And he told us what is acceptable in Aboriginal culture: women can’t play a didgeridoo, only men can do it. Ms Stefani also came to our class and judged the boomerang throwing competition. Mohammed and John won the boomerang competition.

I think learning about Aboriginal culture teaches us lots of things. Throwing boomerangs was fun and I learnt more about Aboriginal culture.

Written by: Anna Tambwe Room 5

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HEAL, Home of Expressive Arts & Learning

We have been HEAL-ing for ten years now at Milpera!

The Home of Expressive Arts and Learning offers well-being assistance to refugee students, using arts therapy, music therapy, and relaxation skills. This helps newly arrived students to relax, settle, cope, process their journeys, and be better learners.

Since 2004 we have sung, drawn, drummed, danced, sculpted, painted and played our way to improved health and better learning. Now we have a Foundation raising funds to support arts therapy and music therapy in schools, called FHEAL (www.fheal.com.au). FHEAL provides one therapist one day per week at Milpera (as well as providing others at Yeronga, Woodridge, and St James high schools).

We welcome students, teachers and volunteers in the HEAL building in the breaks. Come along!

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

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Toohey Forest EEC

This term Rooms 4 & 6 went to Toohey Forest to learn about animals and plants. The students collected specimens from the creek.

They examined the flowers and plants and specimens through microscopes (below). They also observed insects, lizards and other wildlife along the way.

Koalas Meet Room 17

Recently Room 17 went on an excursion to Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary with Mrs Bottger as part of their unit on Australian Animals, and it was a great success. They went to all the shows; at which there were opportunities for students to touch a koala, lizard, possum and a snake!
**Action! HPE news...**

This term, our engaging intensive swimming program at the Corinda Dunlop pool continued from last year. All the students made a significant improvement and demonstrated how to be safe in and around water. Surf safety lessons were also provided by Mr. Scott Harrison, from the Multicultural Inclusion Unit of SLSQ. All our classes kept building up their skills across the spectrum; focusing on soccer, cricket, softball and basketball, while Room 21 excelled at hockey (right).

**International Women’s Day**

This year our International Women’s Day was celebrated with a variety of girls’ workshops on Nia dancing, Zova, Yoga, fashion design, beadmaking, art & craft, manicures, and circus skills (above). Everyone also enjoyed a range of performances including musicians, Balinese dance, and Samoan dance and song (right).

**City trip for Room 8**

This term Room 8 spent the day in Brisbane City. In the morning, we took the train from Chelmer Station to Roma Street Station, then we walked through the Parklands and saw lots of flowers, lizards, plants, and even a scarecrow. We walked through King George Square and saw statues of kangaroos and a giant marble staircase inside City Hall. In the City we walked past many shops, street performers, and busy people walking very fast with their coffees and bags.

We took the City Cat to Southbank and enjoyed looking at the Kangaroo Point Cliffs, the Storey Bridge, and Southbank Parklands. In Southbank, we walked through a tiny rainforest where we saw huge trees and small lizards that jumped out at us from under the boardwalk. We all wanted to go on the ferris wheel but we couldn’t so we took pictures of it instead. For lunch, we all sat together at QPAC and ate our lunch on a stage before walking to the train station and going back to school. At the end of the day, we were very tired from walking, taking pictures (right), and having fun! We had a really nice day together. **Written by Room 8**