

This term Julie Peel, our Principal, welcomed about 70 new students to Milpera. She thanked teachers who organised NAIDOC Week celebrations and activities. She also emphasised the importance of 'Ways to be at Milpera' and encouraged students to grow their English and to be happy.

Room 25 presented the Ways of Working at Milpera, of being Ready, Hard Working, Respectful and Kind using a cooking theme.



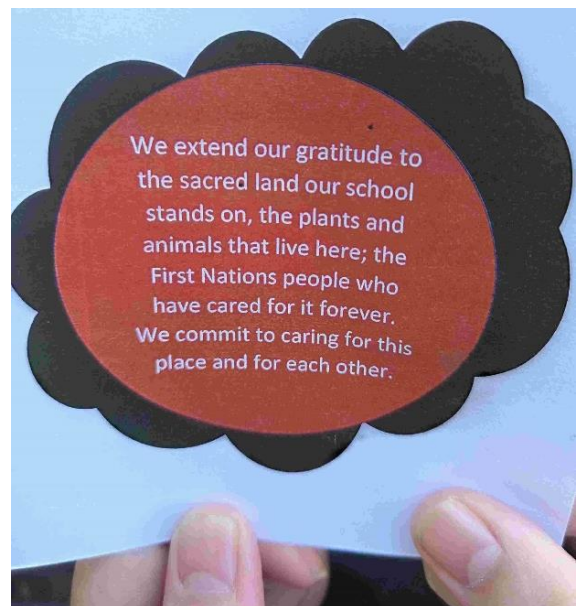
Sam concluded that students of Milpera are brothers and sisters not just inside school, but also outside school, and it is therefore important that all students are kind and respectful to each other and look out for each other.



Earlier this term Milpera celebrated NAIDOC week. On Monday we had a fire, and classes were invited to spend time in a circle around it. Room 15 were quiet and contemplative. When questioned about the fire the students said they could hear the crackling, see the bright moving red, orange and yellow flames and that they could feel the warmth from the fire. Some students also remembered how fire was used for cooking in their country.

During NAIDOC week Prep 1 students were taken on a bus tour to be on Country and to learn about the local area. Benarrawa shared their cultural walk with Milpera. Before boarding the bus, students gathered at the scar tree near the bus shed. Their first stop was where they began their walk at the beach underneath the Walter Taylor Bridge. First Nations People used to swim there, fish and play games. A bit later the students were driven past the site of the Industrial School for Girls. The girls who attended the school were part of the stolen generation and were trained to be maids for white households. Students then visited the Chelmer lagoon which is currently where the two football clubs are today. At this site students imagined what it would have been like before European settlement. The swamp was an important food source. Lastly students visited the canoe statue at the mouth of Oxley (Benarrawa) Creek.

Later in the week students did an art project on the creatures that could have lived in the Chelmer lagoon. These were displayed in the undercover area.



Julie told staff early in the term that Anjelina Akuac, a long-term teacher aide, had been honoured by the Queensland Human Rights Commission for her dedication to human rights and social justice. She has empowered young people, especially girls, for the past 26 years and will continue to do so. Julie said that one of the rooms at QHRC will be named after Anjelina, once they have moved to their new building.



Anjelina, who is a quiet achiever said that she was in shock when she heard the news. She spoke to staff earlier and volunteers at the morning tea about her passion to improve girls' education in the Refugee Resettlement Camp in Kiryandongo in Uganda. She also hopes to be able to support them going to boarding school for high school in Kampala. Later last term Anjelina visited the camp and was welcomed by the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who selflessly live and work within the camp.

While staying with the sisters Anjelina visited the health centre inside the camp. She said that what she saw there will never leave her "emaciated children, fragile, malnourished, lying silently on bare beds, some only covered with torn pieces of cloth brought by their mothers. There were no drugs, no proper bedding, no warmth, and very little hope." The situation in the adult wards was even worse. There were only a few nurses who were doing their best, but they were exhausted.

They then visited the elderly who have been largely forgotten. Anjelina said she could not sleep that night. The images, the cries, the eyes full of silent despair haunted her.

The following day Anjelina visited the settlement area for newly arrived refugees, mostly from Sudan. Over 4000 people had recently arrived. The conditions were unimaginable. Water was in short supply and everyone slept in the open, exposed to rain and cold. Children coughed

constantly, adults suffered from diarrhea, there was no medicine and no food. Anjelina offered a few things she had brought with her. Individuals described their life like hell on earth, abandoned and voiceless.

While there Anjelina also visited St Bakhita Nursery and Primary school within the camp. The teachers were overwhelmed with large classes and a lack of resources. Anjelina said that the school has just 8 teachers with just over 700 students.

Anjelina also went to the Reception Centre where new arrivals are registered, given minimal food rations, and assigned small plots of land for resettlement. She saw people who had walked for weeks and months, their eyes hollow. She spoke with some of them under strict supervision and was banned from taking photographs.

Anjelina lived with the Sisters for 2 days. They have devoted their lives to the service of others and their hearts are full of compassion. She admired their deep sacrifice and courage.

She left with a heavy heart, torn by the misery, the helplessness and the suffering she had seen. She is telling their story in the hope that help in whatever form people can give, can be used to better their lives.

“If you empower the girls, you empower the nation” she said.” Education is the key. If you educate one girl, you educate a nation.”



Julie said that although Anjelina and her were brought up miles apart, they both had fathers who were principals and who inspired them to be educators. She spoke of Anjelina’s amazing contribution to Milpera, of her brilliant behaviour management skills, her humility and amazing energy.

Julie spoke of some of our students lack of statelessness and the challenges that they face. She acknowledged that Milpera is well resourced and felt that the transition phase is challenging for some students. She spoke of the importance of dealing with cultural diversity and said that we are a very targeted multicultural school. She praised volunteers for being present for our students and said that we appreciate and value them.

Chris and Mitch from the School Plus Team (Melbourne) have filmed different aspects of our school this term to make a short Milpera film to demonstrate the different ways that students learn at Milpera. (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3zQbLcO2irY>) Julie Peel was fortunate to meet with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese while representing Milpera with Schools Plus.

Chris has previously worked for World Vision and has made a film of Cox's Bazar Refugee Camp, Bangladesh (where many of our Rohingyas have come from). It is the world's largest refugee camp with nearly one million people. Rainforest has been cleared leaving soft soil on which concrete slabs were laid. Families made their own houses (tents) - no pillows, no mattresses, no fans or air conditioning. Men are not allowed to work, but some are engaged in improving the camp facilities. It's not safe for girls and women to be out alone. The film (<https://vimeo.com/475233431/a803ae4856>) provides an insight into the suffering and difficulties that our Rohingya students have had to endure. Julie said that we need to support these families.

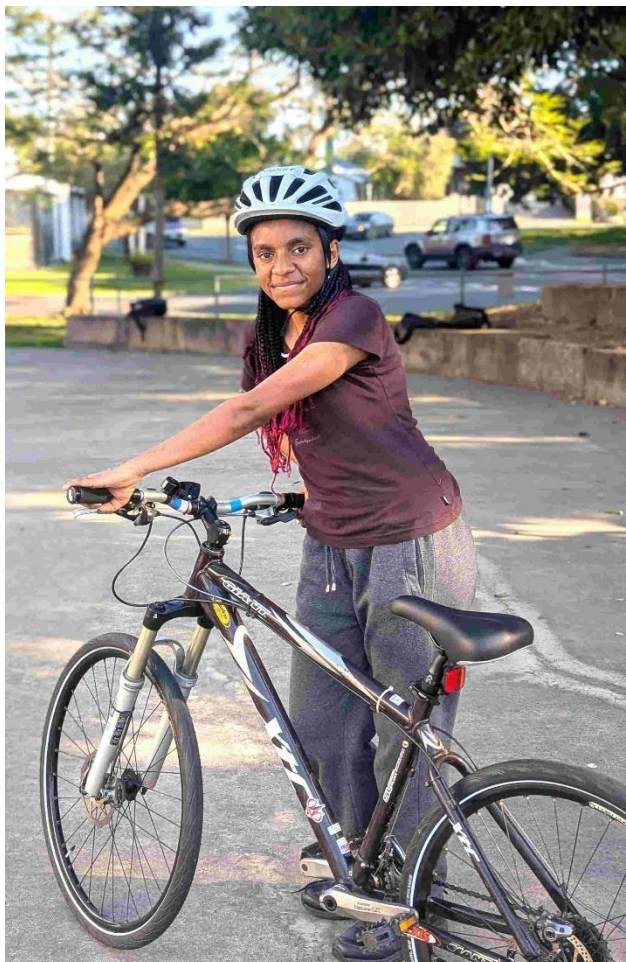


This Term Jacki Howlett held a family Link Day for our Rohingya mothers, grandmothers and carers. The nurse from the Mater spoke about health literacy. Multicultural Australia informed them about different services that are available and Services Australia explained how they could get support from Centrelink and Medicare.

Julie Peel, our Principal, spoke about finding cultural commonality for their children and the importance of our camp and swimming program, which is all part of settlement. They were also told about the expectations of being ready and prepared for school. A lovely touch to the morning was the excellent interpreter, who was an ex Milpera student from 2011.



Students have enjoyed participating in the bike program where they learnt to ride, particularly paying attention to road safety. At the end of the program, they were given a bike that has been donated and restored for them and they also received a new bike helmet, bike lights, a bell, a pump and a bike lock.



Julie Peel shared a lovely email she received about the bike program.

"Our daughter, Yvonne Ann Hart, came home from school yesterday with her new bicycle! We would like to give an enormous thank you to Milpera, for running the bicycle safety program ending with the wonderful gift of the bicycle, helmet and other accessories. Yvonne has had a huge smile on her face since yesterday. She didn't want to stop riding yesterday and was on the bike again early this morning. This is the best gift she has ever received. You have made us, her parents, very happy and Yvonne is absolutely overjoyed."

On Friday the 1st August the annual Luminous Lantern Parade and music performance was held at South Bank to welcome new arrivals to Queensland. It is Queensland's most iconic and largest celebration of multiculturalism. Julie said "the staff who were there sang their way around Southbank. The students who made up the group were super organised and really led us on the journey. The student commitment to Milpera and their sense of belonging to Milpera was palpable."



This term students from Room 7,14, 20 and 21 went on camp to Stanley River for 3 days. At camp they put up their tents, canoed, swam, danced and played games. They went on a night walk where they saw possums and echidnas. Many were amazed by the night sky. The students also enjoyed making damper and forming new friendships. Camp is a wonderful opportunity for our students to experience the outdoors, to socialize and work with each other while growing their English.



Sixteen classes enjoyed learning to cook a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner this term.



The circus program has also continued. A group of our students go to the Vulcana Circus workshop in Morningside every Thursday. The trainers have taught students how to tumble, juggle, do aerial tricks and more. This has improved students' coordination, built their confidence, taught them to support each other and make new friends, as well as giving them a feeling of connection and belonging.

Towards the end of the term Connor Williams, a teacher from Terrace, accompanied 30 Year 9 students over the course of a week. The boys took part in an immersion program where they came to experience a different school environment and to meet students from different cultural environments. While here they also helped out in the classroom.



On the first Wednesday in September Milpera held a whole school picnic to celebrate Indigenous Literacy Day. It was wonderful to see students and staff come together under the big tree and on the oval, sharing food, sharing culture, conversations and connection. Through gold coin donations we raised funds for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation.



Six Swahili speaking students have participated in the Equine Program *Reason to Thrive* this term. When Jane Griffin and Bethany Mahadeo visited them last week, they were amazed at the boys' engagement and focus in leading the horses through some challenging moves. The work with the horses is only achieved if the boys can interact peacefully. Jane and Bethany noticed huge advances in the boys being able to plan together, negotiate and work collaboratively towards a common goal. In doing the work, the boys were able to accept direction from one another, to share and cooperate at a level that they weren't achieving prior to this experience.



Later in the term Room 8 and 25 visited GOMA where they saw the “Wonderstruck” exhibition which explores the wonder that can be found in the ordinary and the extraordinary. The students enjoyed seeing a variety of works many of which were interactive.



Thank you to the many volunteers who donated needles, fabric, buttons and wool to the art teachers. Students improved their cutting skills, learnt how to sew by hand producing puppets with two faces and grew their English. The puppets have been used to develop a short play or presentation, as seen below in Room 23.







The students from Room 7 used up much of the wool when learning to weave.



Room 6, one of the exiting classes, enjoyed making silk screen T-shirts which they can keep and wear when they leave Milpera.



Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Brisbane Taylor Bridge continue to prepare and serve breakfast every Wednesday morning. Much of what the students eat is donated by different charities.



A huge thank you to Marlene Jewell, who has continued to crochet blankets for our students over many years. This term two of our students converted them into scarves.



Through your generosity 4 refugee/ refugee like students will receive bursaries at the Exit Parade each of \$250, which they will use for educational expenses.

Thank you for coming in to volunteer. Your presence with our students shows that you value them, and this has a positive impact on them, their learning and settlement.